California State Archives
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview

with

HON. ALFRED E. ALQUIST

California State Senator, 1967 -
California State Assemblyman, 1963 - 1966

February 10, 18, 25, and March 11, 1987
Sacramento, California

By Gabrielle Morris
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

RESTRICTIONS ON THIS INTERVIEW

None.

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It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

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PREFACE

On September 25, 1985, Governor George Deukmejian signed into law A.B. 2104 (Chapter 965 of the Statutes of 1985). This legislation established, under the administration of the California State Archives, a State Government Oral History Program "to provide through the use of oral history a continuing documentation of state policy development as reflected in California's legislative and executive history."

The following interview is one of a series of oral histories undertaken for inclusion in the state program. These interviews offer insights into the actual workings of both the legislative and executive processes and policy mechanisms. They also offer an increased understanding of the men and women who create legislation and implement state policy. Further, they provide an overview of issue development in California state government and of how both the legislative and executive branches of government deal with issues and problems facing the state.

Interviewees are chosen primarily on the basis of their contributions to and influence on the policy process of the state of California. They include members of the legislative and executive branches of the state government as well as legislative staff, advocates, members of the media, and other people who played significant roles in specific issue areas of major and continuing importance to California.

By authorizing the California State Archives to work cooperatively with oral history units at California colleges and universities to conduct interviews, this program is structured to take advantage of the resources and expertise in oral history available through California's several institutionally based programs.

Participating as cooperating institutions in the State Government Oral History Program are:

Oral History Program
History Department
California State University, Fullerton

Oral History Program
Center for California Studies
California State University, Sacramento

Oral History Program
Claremont Graduate School

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

Oral History Program
University of California, Los Angeles

The establishment of the California State Archives State Government Oral History Program marks one of the most significant commitments made by any state toward the preservation and documentation of its governmental history. It supplements the often fragmentary historical written record by adding an organized primary source, enriching the historical information available on given topics and allowing for more thorough historical analysis. As such, the program, through the preservation and publication of interviews such as the one which follows, will be of lasting value to current and future generations of scholars, citizens, and leaders.

John F. Burns
State Archivist

July 27, 1988

This interview is printed on acid-free paper.

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer/Editor:

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Interview Time and Place:

February 10, 1987. Session of one and one-half hours.
February 18, 1987. Session of one-half hour with Senator Alquist.
Session of one-half hour with Administrative Assistant Loretta Riddle.
February 25, 1987. Session of forty-five minutes.
March 11, 1987. Session of one and one-half hours.
All sessions in Senator Alquist's office in the State Capitol, Sacramento, California.

Editing:

Morris checked the verbatim manuscript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling and verified proper names. Insertions by the editor are bracketed. The interviewer also prepared the footnotes and introductory materials.

On May 7, 1987, a copy of the edited transcript was sent to Senator Alquist for his approval. In mid-June, he returned it with a word added here and there to clarify a comment and a handful of minor deletions of a few words each.

Papers:

The senator's working papers are in his office in the state capitol. There are also many materials in his district office in San Jose. He has been invited to deposit documents that are no longer in use with the State Archives.

Additional Oral Histories:

In June 1987, Senator Alquist began an additional set of interviews with Professor Stanley Scott, the University of California, Berkeley, Institute of Governmental Studies Seismic Safety Project.

Tapes and Interview Records:

The original tape recordings of the interviews are in the university archives at the University of California at Berkeley along with the records relating to the interview. Master tapes are preserved at the California State Archives in Sacramento.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Alfred E. Alquist was born August 2, 1908, in Memphis, Tennessee. He attended public schools of Michigan and Florida and Southwestern University. He married Mai Phillips on August 29, 1934; they have one son, Alan Russell, born 1951. He served in the U.S. Air Force, Emergency Rescue Service two years during World War II. He later worked for the Illinois Central Railroad. The Alquists established residence in California at San Luis Obispo in 1947. He subsequently moved to San Jose as transportation supervisor with Southern Pacific Railroad.

Alquist was elected to the California Assembly as the Democratic candidate from the Twenty-fourth District (Santa Clara County) in 1962 and served on the Joint Legislative Budget Committee; and assembly committees on Education; Municipal and County Government; Natural Resources, Planning, and Public Works; and Revenue and Taxation. In 1966, he was elected to the state senate from the Thirteenth District. He was vice chairman of the Committee on Local Government and member, committees on Education, Fish and Game, Natural Resources, and Transportation.

During this period, he became concerned about seismic safety. His interest in California's recurring earthquakes led to creation of the Seismic Safety Commission. Information gathered through research and hearings has led to introduction of forty-four pieces of legislation between 1969 and 1980.

In 1970, Alquist won the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor and campaigned in the general election with Jesse Unruh, candidate for governor. Remaining in the state senate, he became chairman of the Public Utilities and Corporations Committee, where he co-authored major legislation establishing the State Energy Commission with Assemblyman Charles Warren; and served on the Education, Elections and Reapportionment, and Finance committees.

He became chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee in 1981 (now the Budget and Fiscal Review Committee), where he continues in 1987 to guide negotiations concerning the state's budget.

In 1986, he was also serving on the Senate Appropriations, Energy and Public Utilities, and Governmental Operations committees. He has been a member of the American Legion, Elks, Commonwealth Club, and Y's Men; trustee of the Good Samaritan Hospital; director, Santa Clara County Cancer Society.

[Session 1: February, 10, 1987]
[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

I. PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Coming to California

MORRIS: You're not a native Californian, I understand?

ALQUIST: No, that's right. I was born in Memphis, Tennessee.

MORRIS: And came out here before the service [World War II].

ALQUIST: No, it was after the service.

MORRIS: How did you happen to settle in California?

ALQUIST: Well, I had a roommate the two years I served in the army who was from the same part of the country, originally from Mississippi. He had gone to school out here at USC, [University of Southern California] and all the man would talk about was getting back to California. Well, I thought of California then about the same way I think of the Fiji Islands, as some place to visit on vacation but who would want to live there. Anyway, in 1947 my wife [Mai] and I came out here on a visit. I took a leave of absence from my job with the Illinois Central Railroad.

While I was out here on leave we came to visit my former army buddy, [Phillip Stubblefield]. The Southern Pacific was quite desperate for experienced railroad men at

the time and they offered me a job. I thought, "Well, I'll work at least through my leave of absence." I had taken a year's leave from my job.

When a year was up I went back to Memphis to return to my job at the Illinois Central, but I found that we had already been pretty badly spoiled by the California climate. So we turned around and came back out here and I gave up my job at the Illinois Central and stayed with the Southern Pacific Railroad until I got into politics.

Railroad Work

MORRIS: Were you doing public affairs kind of work for Southern Pacific?

ALQUIST: No, I was doing the operation-of-the-railroad kind of work. I was yardmaster at San Jose.

MORRIS: Really? That was the big rail junction, wasn't it, in the forties?

ALQUIST: It was an important railroad division point at the time, that's right.

MORRIS: And you were also active in the union, the railroad union?

ALQUIST: That's right. I'm a longtime member of the United Transportation Union, which was formerly the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen. After I was promoted to yardmaster I became quite active in the railroad yardmasters' association.

MORRIS: Yardmaster sounds like that's moving into management somewhat.

ALQUIST: Yes, pretty close to it. You're in charge of the operation in the yard, the moving and making up of the trains through that yard. Just below the executive management level, I

would say.

Settling in San Jose; Early Political Activities

MORRIS: It puts you in contact with a lot of people in the community.

ALQUIST: Indeed.

MORRIS: San Jose was just beginning to grow into more of a metropolitan . . .

ALQUIST: When I first moved to California we spent three years in San Luis Obispo. That was the railroad division point at that time. [I was there] 1947 to 1950. The transition from the old steam locomotives to the diesel made a very drastic change in the operation of the railroads, and it practically eliminated San Luis Obispo as a division point. In 1950 we moved up to San Jose. San Jose at that time I remember distinctly because they had just taken the decennial census and it showed San Jose slightly below a hundred thousand people. They were confident that they were over and the city council paid for a special census.

MORRIS: Did they?

ALQUIST: They get a little more in the percentage of the sales tax and cigarette tax if you're above the hundred thousand mark.

MORRIS: I see. And were they right?

ALQUIST: They were right. They were a hundred and two or three thousand, I believe. The county at that time was about three hundred thousand, total. Today the city is about seven hundred thousand and Santa Clara County about a million and a half. So there has been rapid growth in that thirty-six year period.

MORRIS: Was that one of the issues that got you interested in politics?

ALQUIST: Well, in a sense, yes. We were concerned about San Jose growing into another metropolis like Los Angeles. Primarily we had Republican representation there throughout the history of the city, I guess, and we thought the incumbent legislators were living too much in the past without any thought to controlling growth or to the future needs of the area.

MORRIS: Was that [former Assemblyman and Controller Robert] Bob Kirkwood's area?

ALQUIST: I'm just south of Bob Kirkwood. He was from the Palo Alto area. We were represented at that time by [Charles] Charlie Gubser in the congress, [John] Jack Thompson in the state senate, and Clark Bradley in the state assembly. We took particular exception to Clark Bradley. He was much too conservative for most of my neighbors in our area. I first ran against him in 1960.

MORRIS: He was not particularly responsive to union concerns?

ALQUIST: He was very anti-union. It seemed to us he was very anti-education. He was very much in opposition to the Parent Teacher's Association, the California Teacher's Association, and other school organizations.

MORRIS: I didn't think anybody was against the PTA.

ALQUIST: They don't say so publicly, but they vote consistently against the legislative platform of these two organizations.

MORRIS: That's interesting, because in the sixties schools were getting quite a lot of support, I thought, in California, because the student population was growing.

ALQUIST: That's true, but there was an element in the legislature at that time, and Clark was one of them, who were extremely reluctant to vote for any sort of proper funding for schools or for anything else. He was much like our present

governor, who thinks that the government has no responsibility in these fields.

MORRIS: Was there a good-sized Democratic party organization to work with?

ALQUIST: Well, what really got me into politics was the CDC, the Council of Democratic Clubs.[1] They at that time were probably the most influential political group in California politics. I first became active during the [Adlai] Stevenson campaign, 1956 I believe it was.

MORRIS: His second campaign?

ALQUIST: Yes. I got into that primarily because I had met Estes Kefauver when we lived in Memphis and had worked in his first campaign for election to the U.S. Senate. That was sort of a bitter fight because Memphis politics--in fact most of Tennessee politics at that time--was controlled by one of the last of the old political bosses, [Edward] Ed Crump.

MORRIS: I haven't heard of him for years, yes.

ALQUIST: Ed Crump had his own candidate for the U.S. Senate. As best I remember it was Gordon Browning, who had been governor of Tennesee and wanted to go to the senate. Through my union activity with the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, I became active in Kefauver's campaign to some extent. When Estes became a candidate for the Democratic nomination for president in 1956 he contacted me again. I don't know how he found out that I was in San Jose, or who did, but at any rate the Kefauver people contacted me and asked me to work

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1. The formal title of the organization is California Democratic Council.

his campaign in the primary, which I did.

MORRIS: He had a good amount of support in California?

ALQUIST: Yes, he did. When he lost the nomination, why I had met Stevenson a number of times, became quite impressed with Stevenson, and stayed on to work in his campaign.

MORRIS: Were you suspect as a former Kefauver worker?

ALQUIST: What?

MORRIS: Nowadays you hear that if you work in the primary in one candidate's campaign, you're sometimes suspect if you go with another campaign in the general election.

ALQUIST: Well, that's quite true, but not too much so unless you move into the policy-making upper echelons of the campaign.

MORRIS: Good point.

ALQUIST: They don't really care and they're happy to have you down at the precinct level. So I did a little work for Stevenson. I stayed a little bit active in the club movement after Stevenson lost, in 1958 became a bit active in [then Attorney General Edmund G.] Pat Brown [Jr.]'s campaign. After he was elected, of course, during my activities with the club movement I became very well acquainted with Alan Cranston and with Pat Brown and with Glenn Anderson, who became lieutenant governor at that time--with all of the Democratic party leadership.

MORRIS: Were you working with--wasn't it with the Committee on Political Education that was part of the AFL-CIO, political education in encouraging the voters?

ALQUIST: Yes. That was a quite active group at that time, but the Council of Democratic Clubs, we must have had fifty in Santa Clara County. We would have an annual convention where we would adopt a platform.

MORRIS: Some of those got pretty fiery, didn't they?

ALQUIST: Yes, they did. One of the big issues at that time of course were the [Senator Joseph] McCarthy hearings, communism, the recognition of Red China. If you advocated recognizing the Chinese you were automatically branded as a communist.

MORRIS: Did you take sides in that or were you more interested in the mechanics of . . .

ALQUIST: I was more interested in the mechanics. I wasn't interested in such things as recognizing Red China. I thought it was ridiculous that anyone setting national policy could ignore a billion people. But [U.S. Senator] Richard Nixon made a career out of it until after he became president, and then reversed himself.

MORRIS: That's an interesting change, isn't it?

ALQUIST: Yes. Well, that's one of the unfortunate things about our politics, is too many people will grab onto a political issue just because it arouses emotions in people regardless of whether it's good for the country or not. Obviously it's ridiculous to ignore the most populated country in the world.

Now we're doing all we can to develop it as a market, to develop trade relations with it. And well we should, because as China now moves over into the industrial age itself, it's going to be a tremendous competitor on the world market. Where we used to worry about the Japanese having a lower wage scale and living standards, and being more competitive than we are because of that, now the Japanese, since they've raised their living standards and their competitiveness, they're now worried about that same situation applying to them with Korea. Koreans work for less money than they do, and in another five years, when that billion Chinese start manufacturing goods, the Koreans

and the Japanese will be worrying about the Chinese.

MORRIS: You ain't seen nothing yet is sort of what occurs to you.

ALQUIST: That's very true.

Election to the Assembly, 1962

MORRIS: So was the CDC also looking for some potential candidates?

ALQUIST: Oh, yes. Yes, in the election years we would have an endorsing convention, patterned after the state and national conventions where candidates would appear before the convention and ask for their endorsement. The delegates would vote. Each one of the clubs was allowed a certain number of delegates based on their membership. In that sense, I was a CDC candidate.

MORRIS: They endorsed you?

ALQUIST: They endorsed me every time I asked for it. Well, in 1960 I ran against Clark Bradley and lost for that assembly seat. In 1962, why, Jack Thompson, our state senator, retired. Clark Bradley moved over to run for the senate. I had already filed, expecting to run against Clark again, and they wouldn't let me change when he decided to run for the senate. At any rate, in 1962 I ran for the assembly and won.

MORRIS: So you had no incumbent that you had to run against?

ALQUIST: There was no incumbent. The Republicans put up a candidate who had been administrative assistant to Jack Thompson, and they were quite confident that they would take that seat with a minimum of effort, but we managed a surprise for them.

MORRIS: Had the Democratic registration begun to rise in your part of Santa Clara County?

ALQUIST: Well, the major effort of the CDC was voter registration. We put on a very aggresive campaign. I believe, the best I recall, the Democratic registration was about 58 percent at that time. It's now down to about 55, I think.

MORRIS: Was this one of the door to door campaigns that I remember from the fifties?

ALQUIST: Oh, yes. That was the strength of the CDC; you had some real dedicated volunteers, people who would not only go door to door to register voters, but we would have an annual Dollars for Democrats drive, where you would go door to door and ask people for a dollar or two to support the Democratic party. It was amazing. We raised thousands of dollars through that effort.

MORRIS: Really?

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: That's nice.

ALQUIST: It was in effect a real grass roots effort.

MORRIS: How did the Southern Pacific feel about you running for the legislature?

ALQUIST: Well, I went up to see the general manager to tell him that I was going to run for office and that I was quite confident that I was going to be elected, and what was he going to do about it. He said, "Well, I guess you know that most of us up here are black Republicans. We won't do anything to help you. But we won't do anything to hurt you either. I will personally see that you get all the time off from your job that you need to take care of your office."

MORRIS: That's very decent.

ALQUIST: That's very decent of him, but I had had the foresight as labor negotiator for my union to put a clause in the contract, which I don't think he even knew about at the

time, that any employee elected to political office would be granted a leave of absence.

MORRIS: Really?

ALQUIST: Yes. [Laughter] Well, my first four years in the assembly the salary was $500 a month, and I had to go back and work at the railroad, work nights and weekends and during the interim when we were out of session. We weren't in session quite as long in those days as we are now.

MORRIS: Who was your campaign manager in 1962?

ALQUIST: Well, to tell the truth, I would have to go back and look at the records. The best I recall, my first campaign manager in 1960 was a young attorney in San Jose named [William] Bill Harris. Bill was later appointed judge by Pat Brown and just retired this last year. My second campaign in 1962 was another young attorney there named [Gerald J.] Jerry Kettman. Jerry also became a judge. He's still on the bench down there in San Jose. He must be near retirement age. My first two campaigns I was opposed in the primary. Those two primary campaigns were probably the most bitter of any that I have had.

MORRIS: Really? And why is that?

ALQUIST: Well, I was the CDC candidate. In both campaigns I received the endorsement of the CDC. Also, during the 1960 campaign Santa Clara County had not had a Democratic officeholder. Jack Thompson, during the very bottom of the Depression, during the height of the Roosevelt popularity, ran as a Democrat, and was elected as a Democrat, and then promptly changed his registration to Republican after he was elected.

MORRIS: That's curious. He didn't just cross-file, because you could still cross-file at that point?

ALQUIST: He might have, but he didn't do it the year that I ran. He

probably did. I don't recall. At any rate, the county central committee was dominated by an old guard of very conservative Democrats who didn't particularly want to see any Democrat elected to office since they were the patronage dispenser for whatever patronage there was in the county. Because the president at that time, [Harry S] Truman, when making a post office appointment or a federal judgeship, would contact--since there was no Democratic officeholder--would contact the chairman of the Democratic county committee, who at that time was John McEnery, who was a very well-to-do merchant in town. He's the father of our present mayor down there, [Thomas] Tom McEnery.

They put up a candidate against me in 1960, and they put up a candidate against me again in 1962. They red-baited me all over the place as being not quite a communist, but socialist enough to be close to it.

MORRIS: Because of your union activities, or the CDC connection?

ALQUIST: Because of my union activities. I was opposed to the death penalty--still am. I didn't make a big issue out of recognizing Red China, but I would just tell people I thought it was ridiculous not to. I took a little bit more liberal position on funding for education, on environmental legislation. At any rate, I won both of the primary fights, both '60 and '62, and haven't been challenged in the primaries since. I have never really had a serious Republican challenge in the twenty years since my election to the senate.

MORRIS: That's a pretty good record.

ALQUIST: They always put up a candidate against me, but usually it is a person not too well known, and certainly not well financed. The Republican organization has never really made

a serious effort to defeat me.

MORRIS: That sounds like the Republican strategists have decided that you're not somebody that they are likely to unseat.

ALQUIST: That's one reason. And they've decided I'm not the worst person they could have in that seat anyway. As a matter of fact, one of my Republican friends, after I was elected in '64, reelected to the assembly, came over one day and congratulated me. He said, "I want you to know I voted for you."

I guess I looked a little skeptical. He said, "I did. I vote for you for the same reason I used to vote for Clark Bradley." Bradley and I were about as far apart as you could get. [He said] "I know all about your liberal voting record. I don't agree with you maybe a little more than half the time. You may be right, but maybe I'm right; who knows. All I ask of my legislator [is] that he listen to both sides and makes up his own mind. You're always willing to listen."

So I have a good many staunch Republican friends.

MORRIS: That sounds like you spend a fair amount of time staying in touch with what's going on in Santa Clara County.

ALQUIST: I do. I do.

MORRIS: Are there people that you regularly check in with?

ALQUIST: Yes. I regularly meet with the mayors of the cities in my district, members of the city council. San Jose is the only city that has a full-time advocate up here. The county has one, too. I stay in contact with the supervisors, with the chiefs of police, with knowledgable people on various subjects. I ask them their opinion, like the friend I was just telling you about. They don't demand that I agree with them all the time, but just the fact that I listen to their

arguments even if I don't agree with them.

In fact, one constituent, one young woman, came up here arguing with me about the death penalty. I just told her that she might as well quit arguing, that I thought the death penalty was morally wrong for a civilized country. She shrugged her shoulders and said, "Well, I'll have to find another reason to vote for you, because I'm going to vote for you." [Laughter]

MORRIS: When you were first running, that was when Pat Brown was struggling with the Caryl Chessman case?

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: That was about '62, I think.[1]

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: Was that a campaign issue?

ALQUIST: Oh, yes.

MORRIS: That particular case, or the death penalty in general?

ALQUIST: That was a campaign issue.

MORRIS: I'm going to stop and turn the tape over. Then I would like to ask you about what it was like when you first came up here to the assembly.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

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1. Chessman was executed on May 2, 1960

II. THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Freshman Assemblymember, 1963

MORRIS: Did they have an orientation for new assemblymen then?

ALQUIST: Yes, they did. It was really necessary that year in 1962. There were thirty-four of us elected as new members of the assembly. [Assemblyman Jesse M.] Jess Unruh had just been made speaker the previous year. It posed a lot of concern for him, I guess, as to what to do with thirty-four neophytes up here. They did have orientation sessions down in the governor's conference room where all the various department heads would come in and tell us all their responsibilities. Right after the election, a week or so, I got a call from [Assemblyman] Leo Ryan, who later went on to Congress.

Leo called up and said, "Al, all of us freshmen, at least here in northern California, better get together or that Jess Unruh will eat us up alive." Jesse and the CDC didn't get along too well. Jesse was much too conservative and had too much power to suit the CDC. They believed in a more democratic operation.

I said, "Yes, Leo, you're right. We had better get together."

He said, "Well, I'll get back to you."

The following week he called again and said, "Well, we're going to meet up at [Assemblyman] John [F.] Foran's house in San Francisco. We'll talk about things we can do by sticking together to keep that Jess off our backs."

So we went up to John Foran's, about ten of us I guess. [Assemblyman] Leroy [F.] Greene, and Foran, and Ryan, and I've

forgotten the others that were there. Mrs. [?] Foran prepared a very nice dinner for us, and we sat there and plotted all evening about how we were going to protect ourselves from Jesse Unruh.

About the second day after the session started I was up here walking down the hall and ran into Jesse. "Al, how are you getting along? Nice to have you up here. By the way, how was that dinner at John Foran's the other night?"

That Leo Ryan, he had gone to Jesse first and he was Jesse's plant up there. He was trying to find out which one[s] of us he was going to have to deal with.

MORRIS: That's wonderful. Had you had some contact with Mr. Unruh earlier, during the campaigns?

ALQUIST: I had met him.

MORRIS: Did you think he was somebody that was going to eat you alive?

ALQUIST: Yes. I didn't like him. Part of it was because of the reputation that he had among the CDC members and the things that they would say about him. I hadn't really gotten to know Jesse. We have since, over the years, become very close friends. Jesse is one of my best friends around this area.

Campaign for Lieutenant Governor, 1970

MORRIS: Well, you ran together later on.

ALQUIST: Yes. That's right. But there was still some friction in 1970 when we ran for governor and lieutenant governor. The CDC still didn't like Jesse Unruh, and they kept advising me not to have anything to do with Jesse and to run a separate campaign. We did, to a certain extent. It wasn't the wisest thing to do, I found out later. It wouldn't have

made much difference whatever we did, with [Governor Ronald] Reagan's popularity and the money they had compared to what we had.

MORRIS: I suppose, but could it have made a difference if the CDC had gotten behind the team, as it were?

ALQUIST: It wouldn't have made that much difference. We just couldn't raise any money. I only raised $85,000 in that statewide campaign, and I had three primary opponents. I got more votes than all three of them. Jesse, running for governor, was only able to raise about $900,000. So between the two of us we had less than a million dollars. The Reagan-Lieutenant Governor Ed Reinecke team on the other hand had about five million. I think Reagan recorded four and Reinecke recorded a million of his own. I don't think it would have made any difference even if we had been able to raise a bit more money. I think that Reagan's popularity was such at the time that he would have won anyway.

MORRIS: Was that the thinking of a lot of Democratic leadership throughout the state?

ALQUIST: Well, they would give you a lot of lip service and tell you, "Yes, we're going to win this one."

MORRIS: Well, that's what you have to say in public, but in sitting around over dinner, do they still say that if it's a situation . . .

ALQUIST: Oh, yes. Hardly anybody will tell a candidate that he hasn't got a ghost of a chance. I don't even do it myself, strangely enough. I try to tell people that I don't think they're going to get anywhere, but. . . .in the first place, you can't convince a candidate. I don't think I've ever seen one yet who didn't get candidate-itis and think he was

going to win some way or another, that lightning was going to strike. Of the two people that ran against me in Democratic primaries back in '60 and '62, the one in '60 mortgaged his house, mortgaged his house and lost it later. He was so convinced that he was going to beat me in that primary.

Election to State Senate, 1966

MORRIS: So what made you begin to change your mind about Jesse Unruh as a young assemblyman?

ALQUIST: Well, it was after I got over into the senate. I only spent four years under Unruh in the assembly. Over here in the senate, I could sit back and take a different view of his operation over there and become a little bit more sympathetic with his problems as speaker of the assembly. I would find myself on the same side with him, more often than not in conflict with the old guard senate leadership that was here when I came over.

MORRIS: There's sort of a mythology that has never been verfied, that it was indeed an Unruh strategy to encourage a lot of assemblymen to run for the vacancies in the senate so that something could be done to modernize the senate. Is that your mythology, or is there some . . .

ALQUIST: Well, that's true, but Jesse didn't have to encourage anybody to do it. I don't know of anybody in the assembly that wouldn't jump at the opportunity to come over here to the senate. But what made the big change in 1966 when I came over here was the court-ordered reapportionment of the senate on the one man, one vote principal. So when that happened, why a good portion of the old guard were

reapportioned out of their districts and couldn't run. Some of them were very fine people. Pat Brown took care of a number of them and made them appellate judges or appointed them to judgeships. But as a result of that reapportionment there were fourteen of us [who] came over from the assembly to the senate at that time. It was nearly all of my [assembly] class of '62.

MORRIS: Did you stay together in the senate? Probably not, because there were a lot of Republicans, too. Did you form a bipartisan . . .

ALQUIST: We formed a bipartisan coalition. When we came over here there were not only the fourteen of us who came from the senate [assembly] but there were four or five other new ones. In our group, there was [State Senator] George Deukmejian. George Moscone was one. Ralph Dills was another. [H. L.] Bill Richardson.

MORRIS: Anthony Bielenson.

ALQUIST: Bielenson was one of my crew. He was elected in 1962 when I was and came over to the senate with me. At any rate, Hugh Burns and a number of the old guard who still remained—Hugh was president pro tem of the senate. They expected to continue running the senate much as they had in the past. When they passed out committee assignments, they didn't give any of the fourteen of us, any of us newcomers, anything of any importance whatsoever. They thought they could pacify us with a few perquisites [such] as a little more office space or a little more staff or something of the sort. When we saw this was going to happen, the fourteen of us. . .several of the other newcomers joined our group, and some of the previous senators who were dissatisfied with the Hugh Burns-George Miller [Jr.] operation joined us, and we put

together the twenty-one votes that elected Howard Way as president pro tem.

MORRIS: He seemed more your kind of person?

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: He didn't last very long.

ALQUIST: Howard was a very well-meaning, high principled man who got the idea that the senate could be run much more efficiently than it was, and he contracted with a couple of political science professors down at [University of California] Davis to develop a new organization plan for the senate.

MORRIS: Without input from the resident members of the senate?

ALQUIST: Well, he intended to get some input, because when he got their report he brought it to me and showed it to me and asked me what I thought of it. I told him, "Howard, that's a very fine plan and no doubt would result in more efficient and economical operation of the senate. But there's only one problem with it."

"Yes, what's that?"

"You put that in operation and you won't be pro tem."

"Al, Al, you know these fellows all want to run a first class operation."

"Yes, sir, Howard. But if I were you, I would forget all about that plan."

Well, he tried to put that into effect, and sure enough, he wasn't pro tem.

MORRIS: Do you recall what he had in mind, or what the political science professors thought was the . . .

ALQUIST: Oh, they reduced the number of committees by about half and said you don't need all this staff, and you don't need these chairmanships and vice chairmanships. Everybody around here wants to be a chairman. Everybody wants to be on my budget

committee. It used to be the Finance Committee, but they griped so much about people wanting to be on that Finance Committee that the Rules Committee finally divided it up into appropriations and budget so they would have more appointments to the fiscal committees.

MORRIS: So there are two where there used to be one?

ALQUIST: So there's two committees where there used to be one. It doesn't make any sense, because it doubled the staff. The only sense it makes is for the political survival of the president pro tem.

MORRIS: It would seem like it would make it twice as difficult to put together a budget document, too.

ALQUIST: Well, the way they've got it divided, the Appropriations Committee handles appropriations bills separately from the budget. If they appropriate more money than the budget committee [Budget and Fiscal Review Committee] appropriates, why they usually don't get all the way through, or the governor will veto, one or the other. It does pose some difficulty. And while I think it's a ridicuous situation, the federal congress did this years ago. They have an appopriations and a budget committee.

MORRIS: For the same reason?

ALQUIST: Yes, same reason.

MORRIS: For the same reason that everybody likes to have a say in the money.

ALQUIST: Oh, sure, so they'll have more appointments to important committees.

[State Senator John] Jack Schrade, of course, then became pro tem, and Schrade, while a very likable man, wasn't the greatest administrator in the world, and he also had too many friends in the third house, I guess you might

say, and after a while we became disenchanted with him.

MORRIS: He would also seem to be fairly different in political viewpoint to members like yourself?

ALQUIST: Oh, very much so.

MORRIS: Much more conservative.

ALQUIST: We put together another coalition, and here, once again, we had some Republican help. We dumped Schrade for [State Senator James] Jim Mills.

MORRIS: It sounds like the three bears. And Jim Mills was just right? He stayed for ten years.

ALQUIST: Well, as far as I was concerned we shared much the same political views. He was about the same degree of liberalism or conservatism, middle-of-the-road approach to things. Jim's biggest problem was lack of any aggressive leadership. We finally got tired of his "don't rock the boat" attitude. We debated several times about different candidates to run against him.

MORRIS: Was he part of this discussion?

ALQUIST: Not after he became pro tem, and after a year or so we became disenchanted with him. No, he wasn't part of any discussion to dump him. Well, we considered several candidates before we finally got twenty-one votes for [State Senator David] Roberti.

MORRIS: Did you ever think of taking on that job yourself, being pro tem?

ALQUIST: No, I never did. I thought about it a little bit [but] never enough to make a run for it. In the first place, my temperament is such that I just couldn't be granting all the favors these various people want. I would never have agreed to separate the Finance Committee into the two committees. And there's an incessant clamor from these people for more

office space or more staff. Practically all of these select committees you see on the file are just the result of pacifying somebody's clamor for more staff. They get named chairman of a select committee, that gives them another secretary and another consultant.

MORRIS: Gee, I thought it was just the university that did that. [Laughter]

Increased Office Staffing

MORRIS: When you were in the assembly, was there the same concern about more staff and more space?

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: Yes? I thought that was at the point that Jesse Unruh was just beginning to recommend that you needed staff in order to get the legislative . . .

ALQUIST: It was, and it wasn't anywhere near as bad then as it is now. No, when I was first elected was the first year that they had been granted a district office and staff in the district. It was also the first year that we were given separate staff up here. I understand that prior to that time you had no administrative assistant up here, and you shared a secretary. We got a secretary out of the pool. But the year I came up here, in '62, I understand was the first year. I got a secretary and an administrative assistant up here, and I got a district office with a secretary and an administrative assistant down there.

MORRIS: How did you go about picking the people to do those staff jobs?

ALQUIST: Well, down in the district I picked people who had worked on my campaign. One, my administative assistant, was a partner

in an advertising and public relations firm. He stayed with me for twenty years before he retired.

MORRIS: He must have been pretty good.

ALQUIST: He was good. But it also worked out well for him since he was able to continue the operation of his advertising agency and work for me at the same time. We had our office in the same building that he had his advertising business, and he could divide his time between the two. Then the young woman I hired for a secretary was also a campaign worker who is still with me, incidentally. She is now the district coordinator.[1]

MORRIS: Is it still campaign people who make good staffers, or do you look for some of those political science graduate students?

ALQUIST: Well, I've never been impressed by graduate students myself. I was looking for a secretary up here. I didn't want to bring someone from the district up here, so I just asked the woman in charge of the secretarial pool to recommend somebody to me. She did my first two years. The problem then was that your secretary only had a job while the legislature was in session. But when you were out of session the secretaries were laid off. Some of them were left in the pool, the very minimum number, but they were out of a job. So the first secretary I had up here, Vivian Miksak, quit at the end of two years because during the interim she had been offered a job in the pool or working for the Rules Committee over there.

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1. Loretta Riddle. See Chapter VI for an interview with Ms. Riddle on operation of Senator Alquist's district office.

My second term in the assembly, one of the fellows who had been elected the same year I had in '62 was defeated in '64, and he had had an office close to mine. He asked me if I wouldn't take his secretary--I was looking for one--which I did. She stayed with me until '84. She quit in '84. She had her twenty years or more.

So later on the staff expanded. We were given a second secretary up here. Lynda [Hancock], whom I have now, was in the secretarial pool, and she came over here as the second girl. Then when Jeannie [Wilson] left, I moved her up to number one secretary.

My district staff grew. While I didn't request them at the time, the Rules Committee gave us a second secretary. I guess some of the members had asked for one. When they gave me one, why I hired another one. Subsequently they gave me another administrative assistant. Then they gave me two field representatives, they call it. So I now have six people down in my district office.

MORRIS: I see. More than you have up here?

ALQUIST: Oh, yes. Well, on my personal staff I just have the one administrative assistant and the two secretaries. In the district I have two secretaries, two field representatives, an administrative assistant, and a district coordinator, six all together. But I have about seven hundred thousand people in my district. I have nearly all of San Jose, all of Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, and Mountain View.

MORRIS: And that's dealing with the kind of constituent questions that the congressman's field staff does: if somebody has a problem with a state agency . . .

ALQUIST: That's right. To answer the mail, and generate mail, call on various schools and organizations, stay in touch with

various groups.

MORRIS: That's quite an effective network for staying in touch with what's going on.

ALQUIST: Yes.

Committee Process

MORRIS: Did you choose your committee assignments in the assembly? What I found in the legislative handbook for '63 was Revenue and Taxation, Public Utilities, Transportation, and Local Government. Those are still major committees.

ALQUIST: That's right. I asked for those, and even though Jesse and I didn't get along too well, he assigned me to those committees.

MORRIS: How come you got your choices? Did everybody else pretty much get their choices?

ALQUIST: Well, I got assigned to Public Utilities and Transportation because of my background in transportation. I had a fair knowledge of utilities operations. I got assigned to Education because I think the CTA [California Teachers Association] and the PTA [Parent Teachers Association] both demanded that I be put on Education. They worked very hard in my campaign in '62.

MORRIS: How had you gotten interested in education concerns? That's kind of far from transportation.

ALQUIST: Well, we had a ten-year-old child at that time when I first ran in 1960. The neighborhood we were in was a brand new subdivision full of younger people all with kids. The school was on double sessions. We were over there talking with the school superintendent and the principals all the time. Much the same as it is now, the schools just couldn't

keep up with the rapid growth at that time and didn't have the money. When we took our kid to kindergarten some years before, in '56 I guess, why, they assigned him to a double session class with about fifty kids in it. We put up with that for about three months and we took him out and put him in private school. All through the elementary grades we kept him in private school until high school. I thought we better get him out and face the real world.

MORRIS: See what the rest of the world was like, yes.

ALQUIST: So we had quite a bit of contact with school people. Then when I did run in '60 and '62, why, education was a big issue. "What are you going to do about our schools?" and, "What committees are you going to ask for when you get elected?"

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

III. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS AND CONCERNS

Public Utilities

MORRIS: What were the San Jose voters' other concerns? Public utilities is not normally something that concerns the man in the street. Nowadays it is, when rates have gone so high; but in the sixties our electric rates were pretty cheap.

ALQUIST: I was a firm believer, and still am, in public power. Memphis is TVA country, and I thought that the Tennessee Valley Authority was one of the greatest social experiments

anywhere in the world at any time, and I think it's one of the greatest things that's happened to this United States, and I give [President Franklin Delano] Roosevelt full credit for it. Having lived in the southeast quadrant of the United States, I've seen just what tremendous change that TVA did in making cheap power available to that section of the country. It's primarily responsible for the growth and development of that whole part of the country: Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Georgia. I can remember very well under the Roosevelt administration the Rural Electrification Act,[1] where they had to make these utilites take electricity out to the rural communities and the farms.

MORRIS: Did you grow up in one of those rural communities?

ALQUIST: No, well, we lived in the city, but I had relatives who lived in those. I had a couple of uncles who lived down in Gates, Tennesee, fifty miles from Memphis. No indoor plumbing, no electric lights, even up into the thirties, well into the thirties, I guess it was 1940 before--I don't remember the exact dates. I guess that's what brought my first interest in the utilities. I remember some of the scandals in the Midwest, and some old guy named [Samuel] Sam Insull. I think they put him in jail.

MORRIS: I believe so. He's in the textbooks.

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: Well, when you got to California, you found some of each. There was the Central Valley Project, which was federal, and you also had the Pacific Gas and Electric Company [PG&E].

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1. Rural Electrification Act of 1936, ch. 7, 29 Stat. 1363 (1936).

ALQUIST: Also had the Hetch Hetchy project and the Sacramento or, closer to home, the Santa Clara Municipal Utility Districts. Of course, these people, they had contacted me during the course of campaigning.

MORRIS: Was the Santa Clara district thinking about becoming a public power rather than a . . .

ALQUIST: Well, that's the strange thing about California. Even though the areas that have public power do so well, and visibly have lower electric rates, yet it's a difficult thing to sell to the public at large. You couldn't even begin to make it an issue in San Jose. So I never really tried to push public power and make it an issue. But during the course of my years here I've been sympathetic to and helpful to them. Then, of course, when it became obvious that we were facing an energy shortage and that we had to do something to meet it, we came up with the idea of creating our energy commission. To show you how short sighted Ronald Reagan is, he vetoed my first bill we put on his desk in '72 because he didn't think we had any business interfering with the utilities whatsoever; they knew what they were doing. But in '73 when we put the second bill on his desk, the Arab oil embargo had hit us, and then he signed it.[1]

MORRIS: I understand that one of his staffers told him, "You can't not do something about the oil embargo." That he had to have some kind of an energy position. Was it the same bill?

ALQUIST: Same bill, yes. And then the federal energy act was patterned after our bill. That came along afterwards.

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1. Warren-Alquist State Engery Resources Conservation and Development Act. Ch. 276, 1974 Cal. Stat. 500.

MORRIS: What about the Public Utilities Commission [PUC] as the rate-setting body? Is that something that has a bearing on your concerns about accessible power and affordable power?

ALQUIST: Yes. We had some problems with the PUC at the time, too. I guess there was some proper concern about conflicting jurisdictions there.

MORRIS: In what way?

ALQUIST: Well, you have two agencies both dealing with power supply, each from a different angle, and you have to clear up where the responsibility lies for what action. Of course, my major concern with the Energy Commission was for the development of new sources of power, these alternate sources. The PUC had no responsibility in that field whatsoever. All they were was a regulatory body primarily concerned with keeping the rates acceptable to consumers or adequate to maintain an adequate supply.

MORRIS: The development of alternate sources, that would include nuclear power?

ALQUIST: Well, we didn't need to get into that at that time because development of nuclear power was primarily under the Atomic Energy Commission and was more of a federal matter. No, we were concerned mainly with the development of solar, wind, and geothermal [power]. We've done pretty well in all of these fields, but now since the price of oil has dropped down such as it is, there isn't as much inducement for these alternate sources.

MORRIS: I was listening to a man testifying in the committe this afternoon saying that conservation is still a sensible approach to having an adequate supply of energy.

ALQUIST: Well, it's a sensible approach, but it's not adequate in itself to insure ourselves of the power we need to run our

economic system. You've got to have other sources that you can turn to. With the price of oil what it is now, PG&E with their oil-burning generators can produce electricity cheaper than the price they have to pay [for power] from the subsidized wind farms and solar installations. There's a good deal of pressure now about taking away their tax exemptions.

MORRIS: The wind farms and the geothermal?

ALQUIST: And the solar and geothermal. I think it's a very foolish thing to do, because we need to assure ourselve of these other sources of energy, because just as sure as you and I are sitting here, there's going to be another oil shortage. If the Arabs ever get their act together and impose another oil embargo on us, and they very well may--you can be certain of it if Iran should win this war they're in and become the dominant Islamic country in that part of the world--then we're going to be in serious problems.

We better do the rest of this another time.

MORRIS: OK. I appreciate this. I was going to say that's a good place to stop. I must say, you've certainly had some lively times in this establishment.

ALQUIST: Well, it's been very interesting. I still enjoy it and I think I'm still pretty good at it. Right now I plan to run again next year.

MORRIS: Good for you. I think that's the most important factor.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Session 2, February 18, 1987]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

Public Education

MORRIS: I wondered what it was you were particularly hoping to accomplish in the legislature, if there were some specific concerns from San Jose in legislative matters.

ALQUIST: Well, my major concern then, as it is now, was our schools. In those days California had a thousand or more people a day coming into the state and more younger people, and our schools were on double sessions and bursting at the seams, really. The Republican incumbent from our area didn't seem adequately concerned about this, so we set out to get rid of him.

MORRIS: Was it construction of new school buildings that was the concern, or teacher salaries?

ALQUIST: It was both. Teacher salaries, class size, the double session thing. Of course, that called for new construction. But we couldn't get some of the Republican leadership around here to even support bond issues to provide funds for new construction, much less want to vote tax money for increased teacher salaries.

MORRIS: Did you have any contact with Roy Simpson, who was superintendant of public instruction at that time?

ALQUIST: No, I didn't at that time. As a matter of fact, Simpson wasn't the most popular person among us Democrats.

Public Transportation

MORRIS: You were on the Transportation Committee at that point, too. How about the Transportation Committee?

ALQUIST: Well, that just more or less came about because of my background. I had some concerns about doing something about public transit and getting people out of automobiles. Even then it was apparent that you couldn't just keep on building freeways, covering the state over with concrete, that there just had to be some better way to move people.

MORRIS: How about the freeways in the San Jose area? I know that strip going down through Morgan Hill was a crisis for a number of years. Was it already in the sixties?

ALQUIST: Well, then there was an attitude, a very parochial attitude. Many of the small towns--and I guess San Jose was considered that in those days, too, although its growth was very rapid--wanted the freeways to come through town. We had a particular fight where Gilroy and Morgan Hill wanted to route [Highway] 101 to come through their towns, thinking they would get some added business because of that. It was just about that time that their insistence on that began to give them all sorts of traffic problems when these people just wanted to get through town without stopping to spend any money. But that fight went on for years before we were finally able to overcome the opposition to bypass those two towns. As a matter of fact, I guess it was just three or four years ago that we finally got that bypass open.

MORRIS: Was that a major debate in terms of the Transportation Committee here in the assembly and the State Highway Commission, or was that mostly a local [battle]?

ALQUIST: Well, it all boiled down to what I've mentioned about other problems. Local control, that's the most sacred cow around this place. There's nothing wrong with it if you have to take a little bit broader definition of home. When the local chamber of commerce or local businessman would come up here and say, "We don't want that bypass. We want this road to come through our town. You're doing serious harm [if you bypass the town]." And everybody could see that that's what the people want and we better give it to them.

So that was the overriding consideration, I guess, that took us so long to overcome.

MORRIS: How about Pat Brown? Was he somebody that you would have had much contact with as governor, or did the legislature keep pretty much to itself?

ALQUIST: I didn't have too much contact with Pat at that time because I was new up here. That was my first four years. I didn't have a committee chairmanship and not a great deal of influence. That came later. Pat, though, was a strong supporter of building freeways, but he didn't want to get involved in little local fights about the exact location of whether it went through town or not.

MORRIS: Can that kind of a local fight tie up the whole transportation budget for the year?

ALQUIST: Oh, no. It might have if I had been chairman of the Transportation Committee, but since [State Senator Randolph] Randy Collier was chairman of the Transportation Committee, he wasn't about to let anybody tie up that budget.

MORRIS: He was a pretty forceful senator, I understand?

ALQUIST: "Father of the freeways." As a matter of fact--I don't think I've told you this story yet--some years later, after I had moved over into the senate, I was on the Senate Transportation Committee, and I was asked by the county to carry the legislation authorizing a ballot proposition to be put up for election to let the people decide on creating a transit district financed with a half cent increase in the sales tax. Well, I had lobbied the committee pretty good, and I thought I had the votes for it. I went to the committee hearing, explained the bill. The chairman called for the vote, everybody said, "Aye," and the chairman said, "Well, your bill is still in committee." They were pretty high-handed in those days.

MORRIS: Well, in the committee they don't record the votes--

ALQUIST: Let me finish the story. I said, "Senator, I'm quite sure I had the votes. Would you call the role please?"

He said, "We don't call the role in this committee."

I said, "Mr. Chairman, I insist. I know I had the votes for that bill."

He said, "I won't call the role, but I'll take another vote." He asked for the vote again. Everybody said, "Aye." Collier said, "No." But then he said, "Your bill's out."

So after the committee meeting was over I walked over to Collier and I said, "Senator, don't you ever do that to me again."

He said, "I was just trying to save you from yourself. That bill will get you defeated the next time you're up for election."

Well, things change. As a matter of fact, they were

beginning to change then. I think that was the first year I was in the senate, or the second year. I came to the senate after the 1966 court ordered reapportionment of the senate. At the change Collier left the Transportation Committee and became chairman of Finance. I was made chairman of the Transportation Committee. Collier got so high-handed in the operation of the Finance Committee that there was a lot of resentment among the members, and the Rules Committee decided that they had to get Collier to give up Finance, even though he was the senior member. They told me that I was the one that had to go tell Collier.

So I went and told Randolph. I said, "Randy, I think that Finance Committee is a pretty heavy load. I think you ought to give some thought to giving it up. You ought to start taking things a little easier around this place."

"Well, I don't know if I want to give it up."

I said, "Well, I think maybe you better, Randy. Some of the senators keep complaining."

He said, "Well, I'll give it up if they'll give me Transportation back."

I said, "As far as I'm concerned, you can have Transportation."

So he gave up Finance, went back on Transportation. But that was about the time that transit was beginning to become popular in other parts of the state wanting their own transit districts, too. I was made chairman of the Public Utilities Committee, which at that time was called Energy and Public Utilities. So they took transit away from the Transportation Committee and gave it to me. My committee became the Committee on Public Utilities,

Transit, and Energy.

MORRIS: Good heavens, that's a lot!

ALQUIST: They left Collier with just highways.

MORRIS: Did he accept that gracefully?

ALQUIST: Oh, yes. He detested transit. He didn't want anything to do with it.

MORRIS: I see. So would his influence have been enough to slow down some of the early projects in mass transit?

ALQUIST: Indeed it would.

MORRIS: Was that when [State Senator Albert] Al Rodda became chairman of the Finance Committee?

ALQUIST: He became chairman of Finance.

MORRIS: Why wasn't it you at that point?

ALQUIST: Rodda was senior to me.

MORRIS: Is seniority the determining factor on chairmanship?

ALQUIST: Yes, generally. They try to favor seniority.

MORRIS: Did you stay on the Finance Committee?

ALQUIST: I stayed as a member of Finance, yes.

MORRIS: Tell me a little bit more about the transit districts. Those are special districts over and above other units of local government?

ALQUIST: Well, yes. Some of them have an entirely separate, elected board. Now, BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit District] is governed by a separate, elected board. They designate so many from each of the three counties on the board. In the East Bay, Alameda-Contra Costa Transit [District] has a separate board. Santa Clara, unfortunately, the board of supervisors constituted themselves as the transit district board, and they call a separate meeting and convene themselves as the transit board separate from the board of supervisors.

Regional Government

MORRIS: Was that question about local government and local control, was that a problem in trying to set up special districts for transit?

ALQUIST: Yes, it was. I personally favored a separate board, a separate appointed board. I have a little concern about elected transit boards, as I do about an elected public utilities commission. Once again, that local control thing carried a great deal of weight. While I tried a couple times to get legislation passed creating a separate board for Santa Clara County, it was always opposed by the supervisors, and so far they've been able to defeat it. But I think the problems are getting so complex that the supervisors are beginning to at least entertain the thought of giving it up.

Santa Clara has done a very, very poor job in running their transit district. They only get about 10 or 11 percent of their revenue out of the fare box. They negotiate with their employees on a political basis. They're the highest paid transit operators in the country. And the supervisors, they will have the various routes set up for political purposes to please some of their constituents rather than the ones where the demand for transit really exists. But those are growing pains and they'll come around, I suppose, in another year or two.

MORRIS: You had a lot of discussion in the 1960s about regional government. That was when the Bay Conservation and Development Commission was getting set up, and the beginning of the Coastal Commission.

ALQUIST: [Laughter]

MORRIS: Why do you laugh?

ALQUIST: Well, there's another place I ran into the old guard sovereignty around the senate. I had a bay conservation bill of my own when I was in the assembly. I got it through the assembly and had it heard before the Government Organization Committee over on this side. I was going to present my bill one day, and I came up before the committee. [Assemblyman Eugene] Gene McAteer was a member of that committee, and he said, "Assemblyman, your bill has been held in committee." But he said, "I'm going to let you be a co-author on my bill and you can present my bill." [Laughter]

MORRIS: Oh, dear.

ALQUIST: So I don't think he ever did put my name on there, but I believe that bill was the McAteer-Petris. [State Senator Nicholas] Petris has been around a little longer than . . .

MORRIS: [Assemblyman] John Knox also has his name on a lot of those regional government bills.

ALQUIST: He was the chairman of the Assembly Local Government Committee for years and years. He did a lot of work for local government. I was on that committee with John for some time, too.

I have long favored regional government. I think it's a little bit ridiculous to have fifty-eight counties here in this state of ours. I would favor doing away with at least a third of them, maybe half of them.

[Discussions deleted]

Reapportionment

MORRIS: How would the reapportionment require changes in the operation of the senate?

ALQUIST: Well, the reapportionment itself didn't, but the change in the power structure as a result of reapportionment. You see, do you remember what it was like before reapportionment? No county, no matter how large a population, could have more than one senator, and no senator could represent more than three counties. So that meant the whole power in the senate rested in this northern part of California, people like Collier, who was from Siskiyou, Eureka, Yreka. After the reapportionment, Los Angeles, which had had only one senator, got fourteen. Fourteen and a half. San Diego got three. Santa Clara County got two--actually, one and a half. We had to share. At any rate, as a result of that court ordered reapportionment, there were fourteen of us [who] came over from the assembly that year, 1966. George Deukmejian was one of them. George was elected the same year I was to the assembly in 1962, and we came over together [to the senate] in '66. We thought that we ought to have a part in the operation, but the old guard that was left here, they thought they were going to continue running things the same way they had before. Hugh Burns was the pro tem. Randy Collier, chairman of Transportation.

MORRIS: Was George Miller still here?

ALQUIST: George Miller. He survived reapportionment. He was chairman of Finance. At any rate, they just thought we would come over here and quietly accept whatever they wanted to do. They would just keep running the show. So

they didn't give us any chairmanships or any real influence around the place, just thought we would be happy with a few extra perquisites--they give you an extra staff member, or authorize you to go on a trip somewhere. Our crew wasn't satisfied with that, so the fourteen of us, along with Howard Way, [State Senator] Walter Stiern, and three or four of the other younger members of the senate who were already here, we decided to make some changes. So we thought first that we would just change a couple members on the Rules Committee. We were going to change one Democrat and one Republican. We got into a big row when we voted that in one day. We backed off on that, and then we decided Hugh Burns had to go. So we conspired for another few weeks and finally got our twenty-one votes together and went in there and got Hughie.

MORRIS: Fourteen is a pretty strong number of votes.

ALQUIST: You only need seven more.

MORRIS: Yes. Did you do this in the capitol, or did you do your conspiring after hours in somebody's living room?

ALQUIST: In somebody's living room.

VI. DEMOCRATIC PARTY ISSUES; POLITICAL REFORM

More On State Senate, Lieutenant Governor Campaigns

MORRIS: Had campaigning for the senate in '66 been noticeably different than campaigning for the assembly?

ALQUIST: Not particularly. I had no primary opposition. In fact, I haven't had any primary opposition after my first two campaigns, the one I lost and the first one I won. I don't

even remember the Republican that they first put up against me. It wasn't much of an effort.

MORRIS: At that point was there a Democratic caucus that was helpful in campaigning?

ALQUIST: We did form a Democratic caucus. Prior to reapportionment, this senate had no caucus. I mean, it was really a bipartisan operation. Nearly all of these northern senators were very, very conservative, not much different from their Republican colleagues. Campaigning for the senate, you covered a larger area. [That] was about the only difference. I received the newspapers' endorsements and really had very little trouble.

MORRIS: Had there been a caucus in the assembly while you were there, of Democrats?

ALQUIST: We had a caucus over there. That was a bit more of a partisan body. They were a younger crowd. Even then, though, the CDC was in its heyday. Well, I guess the height of its influence was in '58 when they elected Pat Brown and Alan Cranston, had Democrats to every constitutional office except secretary of state. [Secretary of State] Frank Jordan was still here.

But then all of the responsible leadership of the CDC either got themselves elected or appointed, and the CDC was left in the hands of the wild-eyed radicals, and it went downhill from there.

MORRIS: I was wondering about that, because I came across a sort of a capsular history of the CDC, and I saw they were still active in 1970. I wondered, with your early activity with them, if they were helpful when you ran for lieutenant governor, or if by then you would rather not have the Democratic Council assistance.

ALQUIST: Well, at the time I thought they were fairly helpful. They tried to be. They didn't like Jesse Unruh. Jesse was too conservative for the people who were in charge of the CDC. I was a little apprehensive about getting out front with the CDC at that time also. As a result of that, I sort of stayed at arm's length from Jesse, and probably we would have--I don't think there was any way we could have won at that time with Reagan so popular and with so much money. I ran that whole campaign with three opponents in the primary.

MORRIS: Yes, you had some pretty powerful opposition in the primary.

ALQUIST: The state chairman of the Democratic Central Committee, [?] Bob Coate. A judge from down there at Long Beach. I don't even remember his name.

MORRIS: He was the one that ended up on the ballot. Bob Coate dropped out before it got to filing time?

ALQUIST: Yes, I believe he did. Well, your thirty minutes is up, Gabrielle. I need to get on down to a committee meeting. You are welcome to stay and talk to Loretta Riddle.*

[End Tape 3, Side A]

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* See Chapter VI for Tape 3, Side B, discussion with Mrs. Riddle, manager of Senator Alquist's San Jose district office.

[Session 3, February 25, 1987]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

MORRIS: There was one question that we whizzed by very quickly one day, and I wanted ask you if you could expand on it a little bit. You said that going into your campaign in 1970, there was some tension with Jesse Unruh, who was running for governor when you ran for lieutenant governor. Do you remember what those were and how they worked themselves out?

ALQUIST: Well, I think I also told you that I got my political start through the California Democratic Council, the club movement. The club movement regarded Jesse Unruh as being much too conservative for their approach to politics. There was some concern on the part of my advisors that it might be harmful to some of my support if I attached myself to Jesse. Looking back on it after the campaign was over, it was a mistake because I think that by that time the CDC had pretty much lost most of its influence, and the people at large didn't know or care that much about the CDC or whether Jesse was more conservative than I was.

MORRIS: I see. You also said that there was a pretty powerful opposition in the form of Governor Reagan. Why did you decide to go for the lieutenant governor's spot if you had some concerns about Jesse as the governor candidate?

ALQUIST: Well, for one thing I had a free ride, and secondly, we had

to have a candidate for the lieutenant-governor spot. I thought it might as well be me as anyone. I'm not sure about Jesse, but I never had any real thought that we would win that election, it was so obvious that Reagan was immensely popular at the time, and he had probably ten times as much money as we had to spend.

MORRIS: That's a heavy load to carry along with your legislative responsibilities. How did you work in campaigning and . . .

ALQUIST: Well, fifteen years ago I wasn't chairman of the budget committee.

MORRIS: On that ballot there was also Propostion 18, one of the early measures to use some of the tax money for transit.[1] Was that a big campaign issue, do you recall?

ALQUIST: No. The best I remember it wasn't. I don'r remember too much about the issues in that campaign, really.

MORRIS: There weren't any great causes other than trying to keep the governor's lead down?

ALQUIST: Yes, basically.

MORRIS: I assume that you spoke and moved around the state getting to deal with local candidates and things like that. What kind of things did you learn about the state or ideas of what was needed in state government out of that campaign which you might not have had otherwise?

ALQUIST: Well, about all I talked about was the need for putting more money into education and transit. [They] were the two things I was most interested in. The rest of it was talking about the incompetence of Reagan and Reinecke,

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1. Proposition 18, Motor Vehicle Taxation and Revenues (Statutes 1970, p. 3797, R. ch. 201) was defeated November 3, 1970.

especially Reinecke.

MORRIS: Why Reinecke?

ALQUIST: Well, there was a feeling that he really didn't know much about state operations. He had never served at all in state government. The best I remember he was appointed by Reagan to fill a vacancy.

MORRIS: Right, when [Robert] Bob Finch went to Washingon [to run the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare].

ALQUIST: Bob Finch went to Washington.

MORRIS: He had been a congressman. Usually it works the other way around, people from the legislature run for Congress. Were there any conversations with the governor about "What do you mean by appointing somebody from Congress to be lieutenant governor?"

ALQUIST: No, I didn't have that much contact with Reagan at that time. I don't really know whether any of Jesse's people or any of the legislative leadership talked with him about it or not. Reagan wasn't one to talk with the legislature about his prerogatives of appointment.

MORRIS: I can see that between parties, that he probably wouldn't consult with the Democratic leadership.

ALQUIST: Well, Reagan would consult with the local legislators in his judicial appointments. I had much better luck with Reagan than I ever did with [Governor Edmund G.] Jerry Brown [Jr.].

MORRIS: So he respected your knowledge of the people in your own community?

ALQUIST: It wasn't so much that as it was quid quo pro, if he wanted my help on something.

MORRIS: On an appointment or on a specific legislative bill?

ALQUIST: On legislation.

MORRIS: I see, interesting. You mentioned education and transit as things you were campaigning about. I guess in reading over some of the things you were involved in, particularly when you get into the chairmanship of the budget committee, how do you balance out the needs of people programs like education and health and welfare, with the bricks and mortar and steel of transportation and construction of office buildings and sewers and things like that?

ALQUIST: Well, I think they all go together. It takes an educated population to realize the need for adequate transportation and to choose the best method of moving people. If you don't have an educated population, all you have to do is look across the border at Mexico and their transit systems, outside of Mexico City at least. And, of course, that's where the bulk of the educated population of Mexico is.

MORRIS: I was thinking about it in the 1970s, the press and the governor were saying that the cost of health and welfare services were going to bankrupt the state.

ALQUIST: Well, there's nothing new about that. We've always heard that and we're hearing it very loud and clear from [Governor] Deukmejian right now.

MORRIS: I gather from talking to other people in the senate that there was concern in the legislature too, that some of those programs were costing more than the results that they were getting.

ALQUIST: Well, that's a perennial problem. The poor you always have with you. The question is, how civilized are you and what do you want to do about it.

Campaign Spending

MORRIS: In terms of campaigning, too, one of the issues that rises again and again is the cost of campaigns and the need for political reform. In the first years in the senate, were there the beginnings of some concerns about campaign contributions that eventually led to the 1974 proposition on the ballot?

ALQUIST: Well, I was opposed to Prop. 9.[1] As a matter of fact, I told Jerry Brown that I couldn't support him because of his going around talking about the legislature being all a bunch of thieves and crooks. I still think that Propostion 9 was a mistake. All it's done is created a $10,000,000 bureaucracy over there and reams of paper. I've got another notice here I've got to file a report this year because I contributed to that special election down in Orange County.

MORRIS: Really?

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: Well, part of it seemed to have to do with lobbyist registration and the money that lobbyists spend, as well as legislators.

ALQUIST: Well, it's still sort of a ridiculous situation to say that no registered lobbyist can spend over $10 a month [laughter].

MORRIS: They haven't changed the limits in twelve years of inflation?

ALQUIST: No, they haven't changed the limits. It was a ridiculous proposal to begin with, but it sounded good, I guess, to

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1. Proposition 9 (June 1974).

the. . . .as a matter of fact, when I told Jerry Brown I wasn't going to support him because of that, he just shrugged and said, "Gee, I have to have an issue, Al."

MORRIS: In your experience, how helpful has the Third House been, or are there areas where you've had some concern about the tactics of special interests?

ALQUIST: I would say 99 percent of that Third House are honest, reputable men who mainly want an opportunity to present their side of whatever issue is before you. I have never once been approached by any one of them with an offer of personal money in an effort to influence legislation. As a matter of fact, even as close as I was with the Southern Pacific Railroad, they never once, in all these twenty-five years, ever asked me for any special favor. Exceptions, like the Moriarty case[1], are much more apt to happen outside of your regular run of lobbyist up here that are registered, and who are here all the time, and whose effectiveness up here depends upon their reputation for honesty and integrity.

MORRIS: Did the SP make an effort to see that you were up on the information related to legislation they were interested in?

ALQUIST: Oh, sure. If they were interested in a grade crossing elimination bill, or. . . .[Laughter] The one I carried just last year they were very much opposed to. They were

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1. Fireworks manufacturer W. Patrick Moriarty, who was sentenced to prison on corruption charges in 1985. A three-year investigation surrounding his activities brought convictions of eleven people including one legislator and five southern California city councilmen.

trying to pull off cabooses. I don't think they ought to pull off cabooses. I don't think they've got adequate safety technology to replace a human being on the rear of that train to observe and make sure that everything is running right. Well, they managed to prevail on the governor to veto the bill after I put it on his desk. But they don't make any undue contributions to my campaigns or anything of that sort. They may buy a table once a year to one of my fundraisers, but that's about it.

MORRIS: Do you feel that Proposition 9 had any relation to what seems to be a sort of geometric increase in the cost of campaigning?

ALQUIST: Oh, sure. I think that is directly responsible for campaigning costs skyrocketing the way they have.

MORRIS: Even though everybody who's in the election process has to file reports so there's more information about who's spending money on what?

ALQUIST: The first thing that happened to me, I had had a volunteer treasurer of my campaign committee, an accountant friend of mine, who prepared the annual report, kept all of my books, and wrote the checks, paid the bills. Prop. 9 passed, the first year it was passed it required an audit of everybody every year. The first time he got audited he came to me and said, "Al, I can't do this anymore. I can't put up with that crap."

MORRIS: He was audited as a professional person, or just his records of your campaign?

ALQUIST: Just his records of my campaign. No, it had nothing to do with him. But here are these auditors, typical bureaucrats, and I don't generally think too badly about bureaucrats. They were demanding to come to his office to

look at the books. Hell, you can't have somebody coming into your place of business where you're working to interrupt your work.

Then they wanted to go out to his home. "Where am I going to go?" Well, it happened there was vacant office space in the building where I had my district office so we made that available to him. They spent about a whole week, five days, sitting there going over a simple report. He said the guy would come in, light a cigarette, take a few puffs, look over the books, get up, go out for coffee, and come back, and deliberately take all that much time and then tell you a month later that they couldn't find anything wrong with your books.

As a result I had to hire another accountant to serve as my treasurer. Actually, I retained a lawyer. As a matter of fact, I have a young woman attorney now that serves as my campaign treasurer. As a result of that, people who used to volunteer to work in campaigns, now practically everybody expects to be paid. So that's where the big part of the money goes, to campaign workers and to campaign consultants. That's created a whole new profession that has sprung up since Proposition 9 was passed: the campaign consultant.

Campaign Consultants

MORRIS: That had begun somewhat beforehand. Mr. Reagan is well-known for people like . . .

ALQUIST: Spencer and Roberts.

MORRIS: Yes, Stuart Spencer and [William] Bill Roberts, who started out as volunteers and eventually [became Republican

campaign management consultants].

ALQUIST: Well, of course, the statewide campaigns had enough money that they could afford that kind of help. But then after Prop. 9, why the proliferation of salaried people who you had to bring aboard if you were going to keep up with what was going on.

MORRIS: The opposition, or just with other campaigns going on in the state?

ALQUIST: Well, to give you an example of what happened to Al Rodda. Do you know of Rodda?[1]

MORRIS: Sure. I admire him greatly. We talked with him serveral years ago just about the time that he was defeated. I never did know the details of why somebody with his seniority would not stay in the senate if he wanted to.

ALQUIST: Rodda was probably the finest man that I've ever served with up here. He was really a person of great integrity and concern. But he didn't learn to adapt to the new type of campaigning that has become necessary. Living here in Sacramento, he didn't feel it necessary to have a district office. He didn't have one out in his district. He just ran everything out of his capitol office here. He didn't go to the trouble of mailing out a periodic newsletter to all of his constituents. He just assumed that he had established such a record--which he had. [He] really earned the full support of the CSEA [California State Employees' Association], the state employees; he had always been their friend. The teacher's association, he'd been

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1. Senator Rodda was defeated in November 1980 by John Doolittle.

their friend. He was probably the best friend education had ever had up here. The Republicans put this absolutely unknown, uninformed person against him. No one took it too seriously either, until about the last six weeks of the campaign, the Republican State Central Committee put a couple hundred thousand dollars in here. They started putting out these hit mailers. [State] Senator Alan Robbins had gotten himself involved with some teenage woman around here and had a very messy trial. They tried to confuse people by misrepresenting Rodda as Robbins.

MORRIS: Good heavens.

ALQUIST: Oh.

MORRIS: That's a real dirty trick.

ALQUIST: Really a filthy campaign. As a consequence, Rodda didn't realize what was happening to him. He wasn't prepared for that kind of an onslaught. He never did call for any professional help or ask for any. And he was defeated. They could have planned the same kind of a campaign against me in 1984. They put a completely unknown young woman against me, twenty-five, twenty-six years old, that no one had ever heard of.[1] She had no experience at anything. They were hoping to catch me unawares, sitting there, much as Rodda had done. But we ran a campaign just as if we were expecting real opposition, and I spent about $400,000 unnecessarily just to protect myself, putting out my own mailers.

MORRIS: Did you have any indication that there were some dirty tricks in the works in that '84 campaign of yours?

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1. [?] Smullen.

ALQUIST: Well, only indirectly. I have a few friends in the Republican party who told me at the start that mine was to be a targeted district, that they were going to make every effort to defeat me.

MORRIS: I thought they did that on the basis of some polling and statistics indicating some soft spots in the electorate?

ALQUIST: They do.

MORRIS: They had some sense that there were changes in the San Jose area?

ALQUIST: Yes. This young woman worked for one of the electronic firms in a very minor position: no executive spot at all. They were hoping to rally the electronics people, the yuppie crowd and the feminist crowd, paint me as a male chauvinist, opposed to blacks and gays and women.

MORRIS: Really?

ALQUIST: Oh, yes.

MORRIS: Did those questions have a drawing power in the electorate in the San Jose district?

ALQUIST: It depends on how they're presented. A skilled public relations person or advertising person can do some amazing things.

MORRIS: Do you use some polling yourself in your district, or does the state Democratic party do some that you can tap into?

ALQUIST: I do some myself.

MORRIS: On an ongoing basis or just once in a while?

ALQUIST: Well, usually. . . .no, I didn't do anything last year. I haven't done anything so far this year. I probably won't until the latter part of the year maybe, get a check [to] see what's going on and what it looks like for next year.

MORRIS: Do you hire an outside firm?

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: Who do you use? Do you use one of the people in San Francisco?

ALQUIST: Yes, we had some firm in San Francisco.

Special Interests

MORRIS: One of the questions that the political scientists like to write about is the increase of citizen advocacy organizations in the last ten or fifteen years, like the Friends of the Earth, and the welfare rights people, and the single issue groups. I wonder if you had found those a help or a hindrance in your work, and how they are to work with as opposed to, say, the advocate for Southern Pacific or the teachers' association.

ALQUIST: Well, they're generally a nuisance. Most of them are true believers. You're either for me or against me. They expect you to do their line without any deviation.

MORRIS: Even their staff people? They've gone to staff directors who I believe, are the people who are up here rather than the individuals themselves.

ALQUIST: Well, none of them have really given me any problem. The Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth generally support me because, while they may not agree with me 100 percent, I'm usually 100 percent better than the Republican that might be running against me.

V. LEGISLATIVE ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES

Nuclear Power

MORRIS: I was thinking of things like the Energy Commission that you carried one of the bills on. I wondered how that issue evolved, and whether it was substantially something coming from legislative research, or whether there was a real input of concern from some of these citizen organizations.

ALQUIST: No, that came from the legislature, legislative research. My own feelings about the matter, you could look at the energy situation and know we had to do something. It was interesting, the utilities were strenuously opposed to the bill the first year I introduced it. But in spite of that, we put it on Reagan's desk and he vetoed it. They [the utilities] were able to prevail on him. The following year we once again put it on Reagan's desk, but this year the handwriting was on the wall about the Arab embargo and the utilities supported the bill. I think Reagan would still have vetoed the bill the second time around except for the fact that the Arabs had imposed an embargo and we were in serious difficulties.

MORRIS: Do you remember any contacts with or input from a man named [Donald] Don Livingston who was in Reagan's office? I guess at that point he was the program and policies director.

ALQUIST: Yes, Don was helpful. I remember Don Livingston quite well.

MORRIS: He recalls that he thought the governor ought to sign the bill. I wonder what kind of negotiations there were, or what did you get the governor's office to agree to in order

that they could have a bill they could live with?

ALQUIST: I never did get that kind of commitment out of the governor's office. Most of the negotiations on the bill were with my fellow legislators.

MORRIS: And then your staff people would work with the governor's staff people?

ALQUIST: No, we had very little contact with the governor's people. I mean, there wasn't that much to negotiate on that subject with Reagan. He just didn't believe in creating another government agency period. He didn't care what provisions were written into the agency at all. He didn't want another government agency with control over anything. Like his standard speech, Get government off our backs and their hand out of our pocket.

[End Tape 4, Side A]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

MORRIS: How did your legislation differ from [Assemblyman] Charles Warren's? It ended up being the Alquist-Warren bill.

ALQUIST: The same bill.

MORRIS: Same bill.

ALQUIST: The only difference, it was the Alquist-Warren bill the first year, and the second year it was the Warren-Alquist bill.

MORRIS: [Laughter] I see.

ALQUIST: Charlie Warren always said everybody thought my first name was Warren.

MORRIS: That's wonderful. Would you and he have met to confer on this, or were you introducing . . .

ALQUIST: Oh, yes, we worked regularly together on the bill. Charlie Warren and I were elected to the assembly the same year. We had worked together on a number of other issues as well as energy. Yes, Charlie and I both did practically all the negotiating on that bill between the assembly and the senate, between Warren and myself. Warren and I were pretty much on the same wave length on everything. I think I was a little stronger in support of nuclear power than he was.

MORRIS: When did the concerns about nuclear power plants begin to surface? We eventually ended up with a moratorium.

ALQUIST: Well, we don't have an official moratorium, really. The concern about nuclear power began well before I was elected up here. As a matter of fact, one of the very first things I did in '63 when I came to the assembly was to put in a resolution calling for a halt to the construction of that PG&E plant at Bodega Bay.

MORRIS: David Pesonen convinced you that their research had merit?[1]

ALQUIST: Yes. So you can readily imagine I was immediately contacted by people from PG&E and from General Electric [Company], which has a big plant in my district, inviting me to go up and take a look at Bodega Bay. I went up there and looked at that big hole in the ground, and I couldn't see that Bodega Bay was such a beautiful sight that having a plant there would destroy it.

MORRIS: There's no right answer to that question is there?

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1. Pesonen was then executive director of the Northern California Association to Preserve Bodega Head and Harbor.

ALQUIST: They took me on up to Eureka to look at that Humboldt [power] plant and it's operation up there. I went through the whole thing, put on one of those jumpsuits and we went down in the bottom of the reactor. Then they took me over to Livermore. I began to get quite an education in nuclear power.

I was still not convinced and was pretty much opposed to nuclear testing and nuclear power until the government was proposing those tests out on the Aleutian Islands, Amehitka, whatever the name of the island was. I went up to Anchorage to appear before the Atomic Energy Committee opposing those tests. While they listened politely, they went ahead and held the tests anyway.

But after the tests went off, it changed my mind. The test did just exactly everything that the scientists had predicted it would do. Those of us who had been opposing atomic power were saying that it would destroy the island, cause tremendous tidal waves because of it, destroy marine life for miles around. It did none of these things. Nothing happened, really. They did the test. There was no radiation escape above ground. There was none in the . . .

MORRIS: This was a below ground, controlled . . .

ALQUIST: It was a below ground test. They dug a hole about a mile deep, I guess it was. It was quite an achievement in itself. All that happened, there was a little subsidance there directly over the site. I thought, well, if these people can know that exactly what they're doing, that it can't be all that bad. And, of course, it was obvious, should still be obvious to everyone, that we cannot continue to depend on oil as our source of energy. It's going to run out sometime sooner or later.

MORRIS: There's going to be a lot of holes underground.

ALQUIST: Yes. And I'm still convinced right now that nuclear power plants can be perfectly safe if we adequately train our people and observe all the necessary precautions. Unfortunately we don't always do that.

MORRIS: Well, yes. There's the example of Three Mile Island and some of the problems down . . .

ALQUIST: Everybody talks about what a catastrophe Three Mile Island was. Nobody died in that incident. Nobody suffered from any undue radiation attacks that I know of. The only catastrophe has been the financial loss to that power company. It could have been, but when you look at the loss of life that has taken place in our coal mines, still taking place in our coal mines. We've killed thousands of people digging coal.

MORRIS: And that doesn't seem to penetrate the public consciousness like the potential hazard of nuclear fallout.

ALQUIST: No, it doesn't. So far, I don't know of one single death resulting from a nuclear power plant accident that directly concerned the nuclear part of it. The accidents that have happened in these places have primarily been accidents that would have happened to a steam plant of any kind.

MORRIS: I have heard that said, that given the size of steam plants and oil powered plants, that if they had an explosion that it would be as bad as a nuclear plant.

ALQUIST: I'm going to have to break this up.

MORRIS: All right. I appreciate your taking as much time as you did this morning.

ALQUIST: Okay.

MORRIS: You're a pleasure to talk to.

[End Tape 4, Side B]

[Session 4, March 11, 1987]

[Begin Tape 5, Side A]

Economic Development

MORRIS: What I wanted to pick up with today, as you see by my notes, is the permit process. We've been talking about environmental legislation that you've been involved in, and one of the questions that seemed to get a lot of concern ten years ago was that the process of getting permits from different agencies was interfering with development.

ALQUIST: Well, I haven't seen any improvement. That group that just left here were in complaining about that very thing. They were from the office of statewide health planning, or whatever they call it [Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development]. A couple of years ago I carried a bill that would require a state permit or approval of plans for hospitals.[1] It required approval from their office, statewide health planning, the state fire marshal, and the state architect, which seemed reasonable. That was the consensus of opinion when we passed the law. Now they say

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1. ch. 268, Reg. Sess. 1984, Cal. Stat. p. 1302.

it's not working out because we can't get any cooperation between the three departments. They say they don't have any problem in their department approving plans. They don't have any problem getting approval from the state fire marshal, but that the state architect is impossible. Sometimes they take ten, twelve months or longer to approve hospital plans. They think this is ridiculous--as I do, and any reasonable person would--that it's causing serious hardships to some smaller hospital projects, somebody building a small hospital, a couple million dollars or so, or maybe a clinic, smaller than a million dollars, to have a seven-to-nine month wait could cause them serious difficulties. So I would say that in spite of the efforts of Governors Reagan and Brown, the situation hasn't improved.

Civil Service

MORRIS: What does the legislature see as the solution? What kind of authority do you have over how a department or many departments carry out legislation that you've worked hard to introduce and to pass?

ALQUIST: Well, the civil service is one problem. This group that just left here said they asked for additional help and they were given this assignment. They were given thirty-three new personnel, but they got people that were transferred from some other department that the other department didn't want because they weren't capable people. I said, "That was two years ago. In the course of two years you haven't been able to train these people at all?"

"Well," he said. "You don't know some of these people

that have been years in another department."

So, in spite of all of its good features, civil service does pose problems.

MORRIS: What about the Little Hoover Commission.[1] You've been on that for close to twenty years now. Does that have a real role in moving programs ahead?

ALQUIST: Oh, sure, they make recommendations and we move it over here, and we'll speed up the process in one department, and then something will break out over here. It's just a never ending process. When you correct it in one place, why then another department will start giving you problems. Then maybe four or five years down the line, this department that you corrected last five years ago, they've gotten old on the job, and they start sloughing off again. It's just a human problem. You're dealing with people who are too secure on their job.

MORRIS: More so, do you think, than when you were serving in the assembly?

ALQUIST: Oh, I wouldn't say any more. Only it has to be more because the state operation is bigger now. There are more people and more state employees, so in that sense. But on an average it's not any worse now than it was then just because you see more cases. That's because there's more problems.

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1. Commission on State Government Efficiency and Economy.

Budgetary Process

MORRIS: The other question which may be a similar kind of question, in reading over budgets and various articles on state finance, it looks to me as if the Finance Committee was repeatedly faced with alternating deficit and surplus situations. I wondered if that is anything that a legislative committe can do something to regulate, or if you're bound by the fact that the economy doesn't do what anybody expects it to?

ALQUIST: Well, that's basically it. The whole budget process is based on guesswork. You can call it educated guesswork if you want. It's also based on political considerations. The Department of Finance will give you figures that reflect the governor's wishes to make himself look good, or that his influence on the economy has been exceptional, and you have to take that with a grain of salt. For instance, this year the legislative analyst was projecting about $500,000,000 more state revenue for the '87-'88 year than the Department of Finance predicted. Well, on a $39,000,000,000 budget, that's about 1 1/2 percent of the total budget. While half a billion dollars is a lot of money, it's a very small percentage point of the total budget. Then, of course, under Jerry Brown, in his last two years, we had a rather serious recession, and the state revenues were drastically lower than had been predicted by both the Department of Finance and the legislative analyst. Then because we thought at the time that Jerry Brown and his Department of Finance were misleading us and giving us false figures, we created the Commission on State Finance, and we still have it. I don't know that it helps all that

much, but it does give us another guess.

MORRIS: That means you're working with three sets of figures, the legislative analyst's, the Commmission on State Finance, and the Department of Finance?

ALQUIST: Yes, that's right.

MORRIS: Just keeping all of those in balance must be quite a job.

ALQUIST: Yes. And then choosing between those, and then your own analysis of the situation. I might not agree with any one of the three.

MORRIS: Do your staff people sometimes tell you that they think the situation is going to be different in a particular revenue area?

ALQUIST: Yes, they sometimes do.

MORRIS: It sounds worse than being in the stock market.

ALQUIST: Something similar.

MORRIS: Well, then, one of the things that's been a controversy over the years is that the constitution requires a balanced budget. How can you arrive at a balanced budget if you're working with numbers that won't stand still?

ALQUIST: Well, you sell bonds.

MORRIS: But if the legislative analyst's version of the income is higher than the governor's, that means you've got more money to spend and still stay within a balanced budget?

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: Is that a point of negotiation with the governor when it comes time to vote on the budget?

ALQUIST: Well, it's not really negotiation since the people, through the constitution, have given the governor the last word. He takes his blue pencil and writes that budget decision himself.

MORRIS: Regardless of . . .

ALQUIST: Regardless.

MORRIS: . . . of what the legislature says.

ALQUIST: Now, that didn't work for Jerry Brown. Democrats being the reasonable people they are, if they thought Jerry Brown was wrong they told him so, and we overruled his veto. But the Republicans being the disciplined, regimented body of people they are, if the governor says, "No," they say, "Okay, Governor." And they have so far been adamant in refusing to override the governor on anything. It's going to be a real challenge this year because they're really beginning to feel the heat on some of the governor's proposed cuts.

MORRIS: They're coming up against some of the legislature's preferred projects?

ALQUIST: That's right. Some of the legislative mandates, some of the things that we've written into the law. . . .and the governor in a sense has handed us an illegal budget, because the one he has given us to be in balance would require repealing a number of the laws of programs that we've passed years ago.

Proposition 13, 1978

MORRIS: Well, this has been going on a long time. We've also had the so-called "citizen's revolt" on property tax that was the big story in the seventies. Did you see that coming, and did you have any ideas yourself as to how Prop. 13 could have been avoided?[1]

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1. Initiative ballot measure (June 1978) that sharply limited the property tax revenues of local government.

ALQUIST: Yes. When I first came up here I was assigned to the Assembly Revenue and Tax Committee. We met over at [the University of California at] Berkeley, as a matter of fact, with the people in the economics department over there. We issued a report on tax reform that had any number of recommendations there. In fact, I think it's the best tax study I've seen before or since. If even half of those recommendations had been enacted, there would have been no Prop. 13. But legislation of that sort takes a two-thirds majority, and we could never get a two-thirds majority. Prop. 13 was primarily the fault of local government. They sat there fat and happy while the assessed valuation of residential property just kept skyrocketing, and they never once thought about lowering their tax rate. They just kept spending that extra money, like there was no end to it. Of course, the average homeowner was seeing his property tax going up every year and naturally became concerned. To somebody on fixed income, taxes became almost confiscatory.

MORRIS: Aren't there state codes in new legislation over the years that deals with local government's assessment policies? The cities and counties operate under state law, don't they?

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: You were also a member of the Local Government Committee for a while, weren't you?

ALQUIST: Yes, I was.

MORRIS: Was that an issue that the Local Government Committee would take to the county and city representatives?

ALQUIST: No, we didn't do that too much. We left that all up to the Revenue and Tax Committee. We didn't talk too much about their tax structure.

MORRIS: So it was waiting for you when you became a member of the Revenue and Tax Committee?

ALQUIST: Yes, it was. [Laughter]

MORRIS: Well, it's an interesting question. I've talked with a couple of people in the legislature who say looking back that they think that maybe the legislative committees have neglected the kinds of things that they might have encouraged city and county government to undertake. Is that a thought that has any wide support up here?

ALQUIST: Oh, sure, we make a lot of suggestions to them on things that some of our more informed members might think were a good idea, but which we could never get the necessary votes to enact into law.

MORRIS: How about organizations like the League of California Cities and the supervisor's association [County Supervisors Association of California]? Do they see things the way the legislature does, or how are they as a conduit of problems of local government and the legislature's view of what needs to be done?

ALQUIST: Well, they generally want to blame the legislature for all of their troubles without end. They're constantly complaining about state mandates, or that we tell them that they have to do some of the things that they ought to do without being told.

MORRIS: Well, when Prop. 13 hit, it was education and health and local welfare programs that took a major beating, and there have also been conversations over the years that those programs should be funded by the state anyhow. Is this a view that the legislature had any interest it?

ALQUIST: Well, there are two schools of thought on that. No one wants state control of their schools, although I think that

the schools would be better off. But nevertheless we've had a tremendous challenge in eliminating some of the proliferation of school districts we had around here. When I first came up here we had over two thousand different school districts in the state. We passed that unification act, I guess, twenty years ago, and now they're down to something like eleven or twelve hundred school districts. So none of them wanted to give up their local school district, no matter how ridiculous it was. You had these one or two school districts with just a few hundred students in them. Some of them couldn't be helped, some remote mountainous area or rural area where there wasn't any feasible adjoining school for them to unify with, but over in my own district we have a Burbank School District which is a one-school district in a very poor section of town, an unincorporated section. It's surrounded by San Jose, but it's unincorporated.

MORRIS: Still, in 1987?

ALQUIST: Yes, an island, an unincorporated island within the city. It has no industry, very little business property at all, and it's such a poor district [that] none of the surrounding districts want to take it.

MORRIS: That's sad.

ALQUIST: And yet these people, when given an opportunity to unify with the surrounding district, would vote overwhelmingly against unification. They had their own separate volunteer fire department over there, and they even depended almost entirely on state support for their funding, and it should

be part of the San Jose Police Department and Fire Department. I don't think they have any police protection whatsoever. They're supposed to be under the sheriff, but they're really, in effect, dependent on the San Jose police coming in there, even though they don't pay anything. But they're jealous of that independence. And there are hundreds of little unincorporated islands like this throughout the state.

MORRIS: Sometimes it works the other way. I seem to recall the Alviso district north of San Jose fighting fiercely to. . . .same kind of thing. The city of San Jose wanted to annex them.

ALQUIST: They voted. Alviso did vote for annexation because San Jose had promised them all sorts of things. They were going to put some new streets out there, and a new fire station, and make all sorts of improvements. I don't think the city has followed through on many of its promises, and the people are getting pretty indignant about it now.

MORRIS: Have they come up to Sacramento to say that?

ALQUIST: No. We get an occasional letter; they're grumbling a bit. Or occasionally they come to my district office. But there haven't been any of them up here in a long time. In the first place, there isn't much in the way of political leadership over there.

MORRIS: Is that still a strong Mexican American population in Alviso?

ALQUIST: Yes. Very poor and probably 85 percent Hispanic.

MORRIS: That means that the San Jose schools have also had a large number of Spanish speaking children to deal with. So you've had some local experience with special programs like bilingual education?

ALQUIST: Oh, yes. My district's about 20 percent Hispanic, I think. I've got a large number of Vietnamese here now, also.

MORRIS: Those kinds of special programs, either for people with a different language background or educational or physical handicap, cost a lot of money. How did the school districts feel, and the education committees, when they're trying to balance, say, the governor's requirement that the budget be less, and the needs coming from different specialized populations, or specialized programs.

ALQUIST: Well, they come up here [and] cry on our shoulder. They're up here all the time. Of course, that's probably the biggest lobby up here.

MORRIS: The school?

ALQUIST: The education hierarchy.

MORRIS: The profession.

ALQUIST: At all levels.

MORRIS: Your secretary, Lynda Hancock, gave me a copy of a speech you made at San Diego Community College that really interested me. You were saying to the students that you were going to hold them accountable for their education.

MORRIS: Is that something that you have a strong feeling about?

ALQUIST: Oh, yes, sure. I think the community colleges are the best thing we've got going in California. I think we get more return for our education dollar from the community colleges than any other segment of education.

MORRIS: Even though they seem to be continually having financial problems and internal management problems?

ALQUIST: Yes, the internal management problems are their own fault, of course, and yet incompetent people are a constant problem. Your fiscal problem, though, is more a matter of state policy. The governor will give UC [Univesity of

California] a 15 percent increase in their budget, ten percent for the state university system, and then give maybe 4 or 5 percent to the community colleges. And of course, Prop. 13 devastated their revenue base, just like it did the K-12 schools. And Deukmejian didn't have a very high opinion of the community colleges. He's heard too much about the basket weaving and hobby courses that they have over at some of those schools.

MORRIS: It's much easier to provide classes for middle aged middle class ladies than it is for obstreperous eighteen-year-olds who would rather be out driving fast cars.

ALQUIST: Well, talking about forty-year-old ladies isn't quite the average community college student. The average student age in our community colleges is about the same as it is at the universities, about twenty-seven, twenty-eight. There are a lot of people, admittedly, wasting their time, but they're there because it's more gratifying to call yourself a student than to say you're unemployed or perhaps to call yourself a student rather than be out washing dishes somewhere in some restaurant. But nevertheless, I think that anybody who enrolls in a community college for whatever reason is doing themself and the community a favor. They're bound to learn something, and they're bound to be exposed to other people. They're learning how to get along there in this world.

And they're invaluable, the programs that they set up for the Vietnamese here.

MORRIS: This is English as a Second Language, and citizenship?

ALQUIST: Yes. And American government. Teaching them, just as important as learning the language, is learning our culture and our values, and how a Democratic society works. These

people coming in here have never had any contact with a government other than as an oppressive force that was ordering them what to do. Then here they're suddenly thrown into all of this freedom.

MORRIS: It's hard to deal with sometimes.

ALQUIST: It is. They don't understand it, many of them. So if we don't find the means of educating these people here and there. . . .I think I mentioned to you my night I spent on the border down there with the border patrol, and this horde of illegal immigrants. Whether they're legal or illegal, they're still the same people, still uneducated, ignorant, lived in poverty all their lives, no skills. We've got to find some way to lift them up out of that. If we don't, why then our whole society's going down the drain.

MORRIS: Has there been any suggestion in the legislature that they would like to see fewer new immigrants coming into California?

ALQUIST: Oh, sure. Nobody knows how to do it. There isn't any way that I can think of to stop these illegal immigrants coming across that border down there, given our democratic form of government. You might near have to put a million troops along that border and shoot everybody that tried to get across.

The only solution to that problem is to help Mexico with some of its economic problems and lift their standard of living a little bit down there where people would be satisfied to stay home. I think many of these Mexican immigrants who come here would much prefer to stay in Mexico if there were any way they could come anywhere close to the same standard of living that they can enjoy here, no

matter how miserable it is. We think how awful it is to somebody to have to come here and work washing dishes in one of these restaurants, or plucking chickens over in a poultry market. There's a fish and poultry market in San Jose run by friends of mine. Every time an immigration officer--they've gotten the word and somebody spots them--comes in the front door, there's a mass exodus out the back door.

MORRIS: That's what you hear.

ALQUIST: Yes. Well, can you imagine a more unpleasant job than plucking feathers off chickens in a hot, steamy back room? They can't get anybody to [do it]. Even Mexicans that have been here any length of time won't do that work.

Unitary Tax

MORRIS: Terrible. Going back to the finance questions, could you explain a little bit about the unitary tax question? That's one that also seems to deal with what goes on in other countries and their doing business here.

ALQUIST: Well, the unitary tax, in the first place, I think I explained to you it's not a tax. That's just a simple way of expressing it. It's a form of collecting the bank and corporation tax from international corporations. It has very little impact directly on the average citizen, and most of them have no concept of what it is, or interest either. But the former method--well, actually, it's the present method; the reform hasn't gone into effect until '88--was arousing a great deal of resentment among our foreign trading partners, who were saying they resented having to open their books and their business operation

to . . .

[End Tape 5, Side A]

[Begin Tape 5, Side B]

ALQUIST: Even though their California operation might be losing money, they were taxed off the amount of profit they made in Japan or their home country. So in response to these constant complaints from our trading partners and some of our domestic international firms, we worked out a modest reform of that method of taxation. Hopefully it will result in some additional foreign investment in California. I'm not too sure that that's a good thing. I think our Japanese friends already own too much of California. But at any rate, we're hoping that it will generate additional business for California.

MORRIS: Well, it sounded like it was very difficult to work out the legislation, that the discussion went on for ten years or more.

ALQUIST: Well, the reason for the ten-year delay, there was so much opposition to making any change or giving up any of the revenue that that produced that there wasn't any serious effort, really, to sit down and negotiate a reform bill. It's only in these last two years that we really went to work on working out details. It is a very complicated bill.

MORRIS: I can imagine. Were you the one that suggested that there be a bipartisan . . .

ALQUIST: Approach to it?

MORRIS: Yes.

ALQUIST: Yes. I had put in a bill periodically over the ten-year period just calling for outright repeal of the unitary method of taxation.

MORRIS: Did you?

ALQUIST: That cost too much money. I didn't think so at the time when we were building up those billion-dollar surpluses, and more. Two or three billion one time we had.

MORRIS: Did those surpluses largely come because of the unitary tax?

ALQUIST: Well, that helped, but it wasn't primarily because of the unitary tax. It was just because it was two or three good economic years in a row. But outright repeal would have cost anywhere from six, seven, or eight hundred million dollars, and too many of my colleagues wouldn't even talk about that. They would just laugh it out of hand and say, "You aren't going to do that."

The first two or three times I couldn't even get the bill out of the Revenue and Tax Committee. Finally I got it out of the senate a couple times only to have it die over in the assembly. They didn't understand what was going on. Two years ago I had that same bill in and the governor put in a bill taking a little different approach. It didn't go quite as far as mine. In his version, though, it would only cost the state about three hundred million dollars, three hundred to three hundred and fifty, about half of what mine did. So I just amended his bill into

mine. We let his bill just die on the vine in committee, and I went ahead and moved mine.

MORRIS: Did you warn him about that beforehand?

ALQUIST: No, my relations with the governor aren't that close. I didn't tell him anything.

MORRIS: Are there any people in his legislative unit that you do work with?

ALQUIST: Well, yes, some people I guess. Of course, there's some of the career people in the Department of Finance that have been there for. . . .well, they were there under Pat Brown, and Reagan, and Jerry Brown, and now they're there under Deukmejian. It's only the director and deputy director, I think that's about the only two people who change. It's a ridiculous situation. The policymakers, the new governor gets two or three appointments to control a department with thousands of people. But you work through these career people and they in turn work with the governor's staff. It's sort of a network.

MORRIS: So you amended the governor's bill into yours and that moved ahead?

ALQUIST: Yes. We moved it through the senate and on over to the assembly. [Thomas] Tom Hannigan, chairman of Assembly Revenue and Tax, over there, became interested and convinced us that we had to make some changes, primarily to improve our trade relations with our trading partners. So Hannigan and [Assemblyman Samuel] Sam Farr became close allies and strong proponents of the bill. We finally negotiated the thing down. I think the final version of the bill will only result in a loss of about a hundred and fifty million dollars rather than the seven hundred [million] that I started out with, the three hundred

[million] the governor started out with. So it's not all that drastic of a reform.

MORRIS: Does that mean that those Japanese companies didn't get all the breaks they were after, or the American companies with plants in Europe?

ALQUIST: No, they didn't.

MORRIS: How did you get them to quiet down?

ALQUIST: Just the spirit of compromise and negotiation. The American companies, we had to give them some dividend exclusion from their foreign operations. Then to balance the dividend exclusion, and to make sure that no one got a free ride to come under the reform provisions of the new bill, they had to pay an election fee.

MORRIS: What's an election fee?

ALQUIST: I've forgotten all of the exact details, but they have to pay a 0.03 percent of their total capital outlay sales and income [as an election fee]. It's a complicated form, that the larger their operation, of course, the more of an election fee they had to pay. That was one way that we reduced the loss of revenue. Anyone coming into that would have to pay that election fee.

MORRIS: Does that go to the secretary of state's election . . .

ALQUIST: No, it has nothing to do with the election. The election is to either maintain the present method of paying the unitary tax or going to the new version.

MORRIS: OK. The articles that I read said that Assemblyman [John] Vasconcellos had a number of amendments in the '85 version of this unitary tax legislation. Did he have some particular complaints or was he just against it?

ALQUIST: He was involved in a lot of the negotiations. I don't recall any major provision he came up with. I would say

Tom Hannigan over there was the main architect on that side.

John Vasconcellos

MORRIS: Vasconcellos's name caught my eye since he's also from San Jose, and I wondered how it was the chair of both the major assembly finance committee and the major senate finance committee both came from San Jose. Are the two of you both particularly interested in . . .

ALQUIST: That's just a happenstance. Mainly because we're both senior members of our respective houses. Neither one of us were chosen because of geography. We were both chosen primarily because of experience.

MORRIS: But the fact that you do come from the same district, does that mean you ever have a chance to sit down in San Jose and discuss the greater good of the California legislature in the peace and quiet of the district?

ALQUIST: John and I have a little different ideas about the welfare of the California legislature.

MORRIS: Do you?

ALQUIST: [Laughter]

MORRIS: Because you're in different houses?

ALQUIST: We have a little different philosophy of life, I guess.

MORRIS: But you both get elected from essentially the same population of voters. That's interesting. What does that say about the San Jose electorate?

ALQUIST: Oh, [you can] say the same thing about any area. A story I tell quite often--I don't know whether I mentioned it to you or not. My first reelection campaign back in '64, one of my Republican friends came up to me and congratulated me

and said, "Glad to see you back. I want you to know I voted for you." I guess I looked a little skeptical. He said, "I voted for you the same reason I vote for Clark Bradley." You remember Clark Bradley.

MORRIS: Right, he was fairly conservative.

ALQUIST: About as far over there as you could go. He said, "I know all about your liberal voting record. That doesn't bother me. Maybe you're right, maybe I'm right. All I ask is you listen. I know you listen to all the arguments, you hear both sides, and then you make up your own mind. That's what's important to me."

MORRIS: That's the idea of representative democracy, isn't it?

ALQUIST: Yes. I think most people are like that. John, he's a very fine man and I'm very fond of him personally, but I think he was forty-five years old before he knew who he was. I knew who I was . . .

MORRIS: When, when you were eighteen?

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: Really?

ALQUIST: Sure.

MORRIS: What do you attribute that to?

ALQUIST: I guess to your family life, parents or whatever.

MORRIS: Your parents had a strong idea of how one should behave?

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: And the importance of government, did that come from your parents, too?

ALQUIST: Well, yes. They didn't question government too much. I guess one of the things is, I was never at an early age thrown into as many questionable situations, perhaps, as Vasconcellos was. And maybe he had a more inquisitive mind than I, I don't know. John was tops in his class all

through Santa Clara [University of Santa Clara] and through law school. In his early years I think he knew pretty much what he had in mind, got into some law firm, and that's where he was when I first met him. He was a young lawyer in one of the more prestigious law firms in San Jose. When Pat Brown was elected his law firm was supportive of Brown, and John came over here to be Pat's appointment secretary, I believe, or travel secretary.

MORRIS: I had forgotten that, yes.

ALQUIST: And he was a starch collared, crew cut, straight arrow young man down there. I first got acquainted with him a little before that. We had met occasionally through the club movement, and I guess after I was first elected I wasn't too pleased with one of the other assembly candidates.

My wife and I were urging John to run for the assembly about four years before he finally did. He just didn't feel confident; [he said] he wasn't ready. If you can imagine, all the self assurance that he has now, saying that he didn't feel confident to run for the assembly. So then when he was elected and he found out that things didn't run by the book up here, that everything wasn't as idealistic as he might have thought it was, that's when he really became a hippy.

MORRIS: Well, that may be part of the times, too.

ALQUIST: That's part of the times. It was pretty difficult times, I guess, for young people.

MORRIS: Well, the business of how do you balance idealism with reality, I think, some people seem to take it in stride and other people have a terrible time.

ALQUIST: Well, I think John's learned to do that. He will do things

that others of us don't do. For instance, his Commission on Self Esteem. I think anyone that's ever given any thought to that problem knows that one of the problems of people who fail in life, the criminals and the welfare recipients, are people with a very low self-esteem. You know the old saying, "You've got to learn to like yourself before you like other people." But John felt strongly enough about this that he pushed this legislation for two or three years here, and had it go down the tubes and people laughing at him. The governor vetoed it the year before last, I think. He finally got the governor to sign it.

MORRIS: Just recently.

ALQUIST: Well, last year.

MORRIS: Right. That's recently in the history of legislation.

ALQUIST: Although I'm sure the governor signed it just purely on John's pleading with him to sign it, at least give it a chance, try something.

MORRIS: And get it off his desk.

ALQUIST: I'm sure that Deukmejian doesn't really think it's going to do any good and, to be frank about it, I don't either.

MORRIS: Well, there's precedent. Remember back when Max Rafferty was superintendent of public instruction. We had a commission on moral guidelines he ran out of the Department of Education. Moral guidelines are indeed something one hopes that everybody has, but I used to wonder what that commission accomplished, if anything.

ALQUIST: Nothing. Who's moral guidelines are we going to use?

MORRIS: Well, I think that was the question since Max Rafferty had fairly strong ideas that . . .

ALQUIST: And how moral guidelines change. This sudden paranoia--well, it's more than paranoia--about AIDS [Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome]. They've got people talking about things you would never even mention in mixed company years ago.

Public Transportation

MORRIS: If you've got a couple minutes more, since somebody's waiting, I wanted to ask you if you could talk a little bit more about the Department of Transportation in terms of its organizational problem. There was a story in the [San Francisco] Chronicle recently, and you've been reported, too, as saying that the state highway system used to be the finest in the world, but it's been having continual problems since the fifties. If so, what was there about Jerry Brown's programs that led to the controversy with the legislature over his transportation secretary? And then it was probably your decision to reorganize the Highway Commission. Did anything come of that?

ALQUIST: Well, we did reorganize the Highway Commission and made it the Transportation Commission. But that wasn't because of Jerry Brown. That was because of the growing realization that we had to provide something besides highways to move people. But Jerry Brown and [Business and Transportation Secretary Adriana] Gianturco did almost destroy the old Highway Commission and the Transportation Commission, because when they put a stop to our freeway building, they

started laying off some of these career engineers and got them so frustrated that they were leaving. We lost so many of our top people that we haven't been able to replace. Now we're suffering because of that lack and the failure to maintain our freeways. Where before we seemed to have almost unlimited funds for our freeways, that eroded with inflation and the increased cost of building freeways, the increased cost of land, and our systems started suffering from the neglect under Reagan and Brown, and they're in need of so much repair and maintenance that much of our freeway money is now going into maintenance work rather than completing some of the roads that were planned thirty years ago.

MORRIS: Was part of the problem that Adriana Gianturco was a woman in what's. . . .you know, you think of highway and rapid transit as being a man's field.

ALQUIST: No, that was minor. It was primarily her attitude. She was one of these environmentalists who just didn't want to pave over the state of California with concrete. Well, I don't think any of us wanted to do that. While she got much of the blame for what happened with the highway system, she was just merely carrying out Jerry Brown's philosophy, "Small is beautiful." He was going to make people get out of their automobiles. "We won't build the freeways. We will let the traffic pile up there until those people see they have to ride the transit."

MORRIS: It wasn't only Jerry Brown. The federal government had some similar programs. You've probably heard about the city of Berkeley and its traffic diverters, which were also designed to get people out of their cars.

ALQUIST: Well, that had to be done. We needed to try all of this to

get people out of their automobiles, especially for commuting. But you went at it in a little different way than Jerry Brown tried to do it. He was going to do it in a dictatorial fashion rather than doing it in a persuasive way.

MORRIS: Did you have some ideas about a carrot approach rather than a stick?

ALQUIST: Oh, sure. But well, you get so involved in so many things. We finally got irritated enough at BART's problems over there, and the delays in getting BART underway. They finally gave me an oversight responsibility for BART. We went down and contracted with Hewlett-Packard [Corporation] to develop a new control system. BART came to us wanting more money. They wanted authorization for a half cent sales tax for BART in San Francisco County. We told them that we wouldn't give them that half-cent sales tax unless they got rid of the general manager they had there.

MORRIS: Back in the beginning, the public relations guy?

ALQUIST: Yes, [B. R.] Bill Stokes.

MORRIS: That's the one.

ALQUIST: Well, he had done a marvelous job of selling the system. Bill did a great job in creating the system to start with. But then he made some ridiculous mistakes when he actually started building the system. They wanted to be way ahead of the state of the art, the most advanced technological system in the world, and they didn't have the technology to do it.

MORRIS: That's true.

ALQUIST: He went to a great deal more expense because he wasn't going to have the standard gauge that the railroads had used for a hundred years. He had a wider car so he

couldn't use cars that were already being built. He had to find a contractor to build cars to his specification.

MORRIS: Did you point out that the railroads had been using the standard gauge for these many years?

ALQUIST: Oh, sure, but they knew better, they knew more than us poor . . .

MORRIS: Old railroad buffs.

ALQUIST: Yes, us poor slobs over here in the legislature that tried to tell them what to do.

MORRIS: You had it sounds like an administrative relationship to BART, as a supervisory kind of thing?

ALQUIST: Well, sort of. We made them get rid of Stokes and we brought in a guy from Washington. I believe he was assistant transportion secretary under Nixon. He was a quite bright young guy, Frank [?] something or other. I don't remember his last name.

Commission On The Status Of Women

MORRIS: There are a couple other odds and ends. One is that history is now interested in women's roles in government, and I was wondering what happened. . . .originally you were a supporter of the Commission on the Status of Women, and then ten years or so later you voted to delete their budget. Was there something specific or did you think they had done their job?

ALQUIST: I don't even remember the incident. Probably something they did that I thought was ridiculous at the time.

MORRIS: They should be reminded of reality?

ALQUIST: Well, I really think it's a redundant agency. I don't think they do much of anything except play their own games

over there.

California Lawyers

MORRIS: The other one, and maybe in the same category. . . .in 1983 you expressed considerable concern that California does not require its lawyers to keep up with changes in the law. They go to law school, but they're not taught practical skills such as investigation and advocacy. What brought on that rather sweeping judgment?

ALQUIST: Well, in the first place I think we've got too many lawyers, and I think that we have many incompetent lawyers. But I actually had a bill that required lawyers to take a refresher course every three years. I don't remember. I guess I got the idea from some lawyer friend of mine who felt that there were too many incompetent lawyers. But the Bar Association didn't like it.

MORRIS: I can believe it. You're treading on some very august toes there.

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: What happened to your bill in the committee? Did it get out of committee?

ALQUIST: [Laughter] Oh, I got lectured to by all the lawyers on the committee.

Democratic Party Reform

MORRIS: In the last couple of years, there's been a lot in the public press about the changing registration in California, that Democrats are no longer enjoying a clear-cut majority. Does that look to you like something that is changing the

way Democrats in the legislature function?

ALQUIST: Well, it's a matter of some concern to me. I don't see that much change in the way the legislature functions. There isn't really a Democratic party any more. All we have is a collection of caucuses. I think our national chairman has recognized that. He's trying to reduce the number of caucuses.

[End Tape 5, Side B]

[Begin Tape 6, Side A]

ALQUIST: And while all of these caucuses perhaps address a problem that needs to be addressed, they don't give a damn about the party as a whole. They're all just out for their one little cause. And consequently, we don't really have any sort of a unified, sensible party platform, or response to all of the problems that the country faces at the present time.

MORRIS: Do you see some ideas in California that might address that problem?

ALQUIST: Well, I'm not interested at this point in my life about trying to reform the party.

Restoring Public Trust

MORRIS: Are there any particular areas we haven't talked about in talking about your experiences in the legislature or in the nature of advice for those who are going to have to deal with whatever happens to the Democratic party?

ALQUIST: We've got to find some way of restoring a little more

public trust in the legislature and in government as a whole. It becomes increasingly difficult when you have things like what's happening in Washington here. Here's a president that was almost idolized by a large majority of the people, and then to find out he's lying to the United States and incompetent to boot. Well, some of us who knew him knew thought that when he went up there.

I don't know how you correct all these things. I mean, we're going to have a big scandal here in this legislature before this is all over. This outrageous cost of running for office just can't keep up. How can anybody have any confidence in the legislature with these kinds of costs? There's one legislator who made nearly $100,000 in honorariums and $150,000 in legal fees.

MORRIS: Yes. Twenty-five years ago we established a full-time legislature, and that was supposed to mean that people received a better salary so that it would reduce the influence of outside money? How come reform doesn't usually reform what it is that you set out to do?

ALQUIST: Well, the reform wasn't all that much reform. The full-time legislature was supposedly created in 1966 by a referendum which was placed on the ballot.[1] The salary was set at $16,000 a year, with no more than a 5 percent increase that the legislature can vote itself. The salary now, I don't know exactly what it is, somewhere around $37,000, I guess. So while the average California salary is probably a little bit less than that, it's still not the

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1. Proposition 1A (November 1966).

type of salary that I would say three-fourths of the legislature could command if they were in private industry somewhere. But I don't think doubling the salary, or tripling it, as [Assembly Speaker] Willie Brown [Jr.] is proposing, would really improve the quality of the legislature.

MORRIS: How would it prevent honoraria? Somebody with a little hustle is always going to have time to do a little consulting.

ALQUIST: Well, sure.

MORRIS: And they're going to want to be paid for it. How do you . . .

ALQUIST: Well, do you know the only difference between a fee and a bribe?

MORRIS: I don't think I've heard that one.

ALQUIST: It's an old joke--a law degree. I don't know how you're going to change that.

MORRIS: I agree. I think it is one of the questions that is very much in the minds of people out there in the voting public and at the universities.

ALQUIST: You know, it's amazing our political system works as well as it does. Some charismatic leader like Ronald Reagan who had some real realistic reform proposals could get out there and lead people into it. But somebody like Reagan gets out there with a big cry about, "Get government off your backs and their hand out of your pocket," and people just cheer him on and on and on, and yet they're destroying the very thing that made this country what it is. Government is what does it. Government is the only thing that can provide the University of California and make it available to all young people in California. There aren't very many of them that are going to go to Stanford or USC

[University of Southern California]. They've got their place, but if we're going to have free public education, it takes government to provide it, and it takes government to provide the infrastructure that makes our whole system work. Reagan is doing a terrible disservice, and Deukmejian is just as bad. I don't know how you find leadership [who will] stand up and say, "Folks, here's what we need, and we gotta do it."

MORRIS: Maybe from the Commission on Self Esteem.

ALQUIST: [Laughter]

MORRIS: Well, I keep thinking that out there maybe in San Diego Community College, maybe at Santa Clara, somewhere out there in the state are the people who are going to be our governors and presidents. Everybody who is born now, when they get to be thirty-five they can run for president. I don't know whether I think that's encouraging or . . .

ALQUIST: Some of that great student leadership that came out of Berkeley back in the sixties?

MORRIS: I don't know, but somewhere there's somebody, as you say, with . . .

ALQUIST: Oh, sure, somebody will come along.

MORRIS: I hope it's somebody that you and I would be comfortable with.

ALQUIST: Yes.

MORRIS: Well, I must say I do enjoy talking with you.

[End Tape 6, Side A]

[Session 2, February 18, 1987, continued]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT LORETTA RIDDLE ON SENATOR ALQUIST'S SAN JOSE DISTRICT OFFICE

Office Management

MORRIS: If you don't mind, I'd like to leave the tape recorder on, and then I can concentrate on what you're saying.

RIDDLE: Well, hopefully I'll remember something.

MORRIS: I'm interested in how somebody in office with all these committees and all the legislation, how they stay up to speed on the different subjects. Does he read a lot?

RIDDLE: He's an avid reader. I think when he's not meeting with someone or not actually going through correspondence he's just constantly reading, even in the office. But I think as time goes on and you've had all these committees that you have served on, you just. . . .you know how you have a particular interest in everything. But a lot of people call him and want his input, so he really keeps up on everything. That has a lot to do with it. It totally is a part of everything that's going on at the same time. It's really an

art. Then again, I would say most of it is just simply reading all the papers, reading all the magazines, reading all the literature comes out. And a lot of research work, too. In all the years I've worked with him, he spends a great deal of time working with the experts. He's the chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on Seismic Safety. I don't know if he's got into that with you.

MORRIS: Professor Stan Scott, at the UC [University of California, Berkeley] Institute of Governmental Studies, is planning to interview Senator Alquist on that later this year.

RIDDLE: Yes, I remember that he worked with the committee. The senator spent a great deal of time meeting all the professors in that department at the university, and a Dr.--I can't remember his name now.

MORRIS: Karl Steinbrugge?

RIDDLE: Steinbrugge, exactly. Maybe every other week he was in the office. He [Senator Alquist] makes sure whenever he takes on any project that he gets the best minds, and he keeps discussing it with them and he gets reports from them. He doesn't profess to know all the details, but he always makes sure that he acts almost like an ombudsman. He can refer people to all these agencies. He spends a lot of time finding out what the new agencies are, how they're functioning, and whether they're really doing a job.

MORRIS: In state government?

RIDDLE: That's in state government, and I think that's where he gets so upset with Governor Brown, Jr.; so much of the time he never felt that his appointments were adequate to the job. He was a brilliant young man, he thought, but he just didn't feel he thought through appointments, especially many of the commissions. He got to the point where he said, "Well, I

just know that if Jerry has appointed that person he's not going to really be adequate to the job." Well, that's a little extreme example, but generally he was right.

MORRIS: Earlier you said something about part of your job being to keep track of what's going on . . .

RIDDLE: In the district, yes.

MORRIS: . . . and see what the emerging issues are.

RIDDLE: Yes, right.

MORRIS: What does it take to flag an issue as something that Senator Alquist might be interested in, rather than something that somebody else is going to look after or roll away of its own accord?

RIDDLE: Well, it's kind of interesting. It sort of just happens. Say there's a particular issue or problem on transportation, it's interesting, people will come to him. He's served on most of the key committees. He's probably one of the first legislators they'll come and talk to and explain the problem, and will generally say, "Well, this is what the problem is, Senator. Would you be willing to carry this legislation for us?"

I think it comes through mostly that way. Or I will get letters inviting him to particular events. Well, obviously, he cannot participate and go to every luncheon, every panel discussion and what not. I know that.

MORRIS: You go to meetings . ..

RIDDLE: Yes, I go to meetings. I've been doing this for many years. We have two other aides that do that, too, so among the three of us we pretty much cover everything, but we always keep uppermost in our minds how serious this is, how important. It's just a matter of hopefully having good judgment. But we bring back our reports and we explain to

him, and he pretty much can assess and screen and decide if it's really important. If it is, then we invite these people to come back, the key people with whatever particular problem we're talking about. Then we'll discuss it with them, and then with our input, their input, and then maybe making a few key phone calls, then he decides whether he thinks he should put that legislation in or not. Each one of them [legislators], I think, has certain expertise. They feel comfortable in a particular type of legislation, and he's always been interested in transportation, having been a railroad man.

His backgrounds are interesting. He really understands the problems of the unions, too. Most of the union men, whenever there's a real problem, come to him, and he's carried a lot of legislation that will affect them one way or the other.

MORRIS: It's usually already at the stage of draft legislation by this time?

RIDDLE: Not always. Many times legislation comes from other avenues, too. You know, [we get] volumes of mail, and that's not unique to him. Believe me, all the mail goes past his desk. It's always amazed me, but he will say, reply so and so to this or to that, and we'll just keep roaming through the piles of mail. But with that he'll make notations.

If he sees something that's really important he'll say to me or one of the aides, "Follow through on this and let me know." And then maybe he will just decide by that one letter, "I want to put some legislation in to help this problem," after going through the types of things I told you.

People come in and talk to him and he finds out. So that's another way. Maybe someone will just call him up and tell him about a problem. That's another way. There are many avenues. But all the information comes to him and then he can determine.

MORRIS: Does he spend much time in other parts of the state?

RIDDLE: He always has. Well, when he goes to other parts of the state, it's generally in relation to a committee he chairs or the committee he's on. But of course, when he ran for lieutenant governor, that really gave him a vehicle to really find out the needs of the whole state. He and Jesse Unruh. It was a very interesting year. [Alquist and Unruh are] two, I think, very unique minds together. I just thought they would have been a great team, but Reagan and Reinecke came along.

MORRIS: I wish he had had another five minutes, because the next action I wanted to ask him about was. . . .last week when I talked to him he said that there were some tensions between himself and Jesse Unruh when the campaign began, and I wondered what those tensions were and how they worked them out.

RIDDLE: He probably can better answer that. I don't know if I would be comfortable trying to give you an answer there. I don't think I was really. . . .at that time I started out as a secretary and then a field rep [representative]. I don't know quite where I was at that time. I think I was maybe secretary or the field rep. Then when I became the AA [administrative assistant], then you get to know more of the reasons why he's doing things, and now I'm what's called the district coordinator, so I coordinate the district and I come up here and work with the consultants. Just about

everything when he's not there, I'll take his place.

MORRIS: He seems to be really well and closely grounded and related to what's going on in San Jose, more so than some legislators.

RIDDLE: I would say that each office has a different orientation. His office has always been--and this is basically the truth--to serve the constituent. When I first started working for him, and he asked me to come in the office. I had worked with his wife and we got along famously. She suggested I come and work for him. I said, "Oh, I don't know." But I remember when I was interviewed, I told about the things I would like to do with my enthusiasm.

He said, "Well, you know, I'll hire you."

I said, "Well, I'll just really try to do a good job, but I don't think I understand a lot about the political process."

He said, "Wonderful. If you don't know anything about the political process, now I know I'll hire you." So that was it. You learn. He gives people a lot of leeway, and he waits to see what your particular talents are. I think before you know it, you're working into the area that you work the best. And I will say to you--this is on tape--every person that's come to work for us, even interns--we have a wonderful intern program--and I will say this to you just to give you an orientation to his feelings for people. For the last twenty years we've had interns coming from Ohlone College, from Stanford, from San Jose University [California State University, San Jose], from Santa Clara. They spend three months with us and we give them a grade, and we give them as much experience as we can. All of them have had that program, but that to him is one of the most

important things we do in the district, and it's really proven to be a great satisfaction for us and the colleges.

MORRIS: It's tough to supervise interns.

RIDDLE: But they've all been very happy there, and I think it's because he'll let them come in and talk to him, and if they have a particular flair for writing, he'll let them go out and do things that maybe someone on the staff would do; but he shows a particular confidence in people, and the things they come up with are just incredible. They're really an asset and another layer of expertise on some things we don't know. We treat them as if they're members of the staff. So at the college political science department they're always inviting him over there.

And then he loves to speak to classes. Now, since I was an elementary teacher, I've gone with him. I think he will turn down meetings other people would consider more important, to go and talk to schools. He will take maybe a half a day and go to maybe three or four grades. I'll go with him with all the literature and whatnot, and we have a ball with the children. He's been even down on the second- or third-grade level. We sit and have lunch with them. It's wonderful.

From the fourth grade on, he has this great presentation. He'll spend a lot of time to talk to the whole school, a presentations assembly and whatnot. Oh, the questions are just marvelous that some of them ask. Then they all write stacks of letters to him. We've kept them. I've kept files and files of things kids have written. It's just really a kick.

MORRIS: I'll bet they're wonderful. Does he do a sort of a presentation of "This is how your state government works?"

RIDDLE: Oh, yes. He'll give a presentation in the classroom, and then he'll let the kids ask questions. That's the most marvelous part of all.

MORRIS: Does he say, "This is what I'm doing now."?

RIDDLE: Oh, yes. I wish I could remember some of the key things that some of these children have asked. He'll say, "Well, these are my committees, and this is what a senator does."

And they'll say things like, "What do you have to do to be a senator?" And, "How do you get elected?" And they'll ask about computerized mail. Some of the technical things that they know, it's just absolutely amazing. Things that we think the children wouldn't understand, if you present it to them on their level of understanding, they can just about absorb anything. And they'll go home and say they met the senator, and this and that. It really means something to these kids.

MORRIS: Great outreach kind of thing.

RIDDLE: That is one of the key things he prefers doing over anything else, talking to the [children]. . . .and then the high schools and colleges. We've spent many, many days visiting universities.

About Mrs. Alquist

MORRIS: You mentioned you had gotten acquainted with Mrs. [Mai] Alquist. Did she run the office, or did she at one point?

RIDDLE: She's a wonderful political wife. I'll say I consider her a perfect political wife. She spent a lot of time helping him with his campaigns, and I was fortunate enough to have worked with her on the first few campaigns. But she was working, too, so as time went on volunteers took over. But

she more or less handled and directed his campaigns for a few years.

MORRIS: Is she a teacher, or did she have some experience in politics?

RIDDLE: No, I think she had a [statistical] firm in Memphis, Tennessee. She has a wonderful background, and then she worked for the [San Jose] Mercury News for years and was very key. I think she was in charge of all the telephone operation of the Mercury.

MORRIS: What a great combination.

RIDDLE: Her communicative skills were incredible and she has a lot of friends in the community, so I would say she was one of his great assets, and still is. She goes every place with him, which is really very nice.

MORRIS: That's great. I'm really impressed by the number of team couples . . .

RIDDLE: It's a team. This is a team operation all the way. I think they're people that are admired in the community.

MORRIS: I would think so.

RIDDLE: For more reasons than just being a senator. Like, they would always have a very friendly approach. I can't tell you how many meetings that they would have in their home and they would have people in to fix breakfasts and whatnot. That's before the more sophisticated type of happening. I remember when he first ran for election, or for reelection, their whole church got in behind him. All these people. . . .we didn't have the computerized mailers then. Everything was hand written. We would get thousands of envelopes, and people would sit there, hour after hour.

MORRIS: The people in the church would sit there?

RIDDLE: Oh, yes, and other volunteers. She [Mrs. Alquist] had this

great knack for getting particular groups. She belonged to a lot of groups. Then she would intercede with them and then we would help bring in volunteers. But I would say that the people who have worked with him, a lot of them are still with us who started in 1962.

MORRIS: Really? That's impressive.

RIDDLE: Yes, I think it is, too. But I think these are basically factual things.

[Discussions deleted]

Developing Issues

MORRIS: I think how issues develop is absolutely fascinating.

RIDDLE: We see more of that in the district, you see, how these ideas develop before they come here. When you get up here, it's a marvelous place. It's all research and developing the ideas, putting it into legislation. And then after the legislation is written, than that's when the fun starts. Where do the ideas come from? I remember one idea came from his son [Alan Russell Alquist]. It was an interesting piece of legislation, where they take a test of babies, a urine test, and they could tell whether the baby would be mentally retarded or not. So the senator's son approached him on this. I think he saw a TV program or something. The senator thought it was a good idea, so I believe that he brought it here. Now, I don't know how I'm going to approach this part of it, but he was ready to put the legislation in. You're going to have to ask him the details on it, but the bill ended up with another legislator's name on it. They didn't talk for quite a while.

MORRIS: I can believe that.

RIDDLE: Oh, yes, they had their problems. I've seen senators in and out of here on all of these bills. And now I think that has become law and this is what happens every time a newborn leaves the hospital, this [is] the test that they perform. It's a very difficult word and I can't remember exactly what--phenylketonuria. I haven't thought about that one in years either.

MORRIS: One of my particular interests in this whole business of state government is the role of the staff people. I think that a lot of times there are complaints about how much staff there is and everything, but . . .

RIDDLE: There's so much to do.

MORRIS: The teamwork is really interesting.

Political Internships

RIDDLE: Again, referring back to the interns, I wish I could remember all of the young people that have come through. After they stay with us, they go back to their political science class, and then they have to write a report to the professor. The professor is always very kind and sends us a copy, and I really think most of them have been very positive reports. But what we look for is not if they say how great we are and whatnot, but what they really got out of it. You assume that they've had so much more in the background of practical politics, but there they get mostly theory.

One of the professors is a very good friend of Senator Alquist and mine, Dr. Roy Young. He was chairman of the department at San Jose State. So he called one day and

said, "Loretta, I'd like to take you to lunch."

I was just really flattered and said, "Oh, wonderful, Dr. Young."

So we went to this little restaurant and we had lunch. As we were eating he said, "You know, I'm going to take my sabbatical next year."

I said, "Wonderful, Dr. Young. What are you going to do?"

He said, "I think I'll work in a political office."

"Oh," I said, "Are you going to go to Washington, D.C.?" I was thinking he was such a prestigious professor.

He said, "No."

I said, "Are you going to work in Sacramento?"

"No."

I said, "Well, what are you going to do?"

He looked at me and he said, "I'm going to work in your office."

I said, "You are?" And I thought, "Oh, gosh, there goes our mystique, our great office." Because he had been sending interns to us for quite a few years. I said, "Well, you certainly would be welcome, Dr. Young. What capacity do you want to play it? We can certainly get a desk for you."

I thought he was going to say, "Research." He said, "I want to be an intern."

I said, "You want to be an intern?"

He said, "And I want to be treated just like you treat the interns that I send here. I'm writing a book on interns and what they learn, what they get out of political offices, and I'm choosing your office."

Well, of course, we were extremely flattered, and we said, "Well, you're welcome. When do you want to come?"

He said, "Well, in about a month or two I'll call you."

So he did, and in comes Dr. Young. So I said, "All right, you wanted to be treated like an intern." We sat him at the intern's desk, and we gave him exactly what we gave the interns, and we gave him constituent problems to work on. We gave him correspondence and let him answer the letters.

He had a ball. The kids in some of the classes would call me and say, "Oh, Mrs. Riddle, Dr. Young read some of the [constituent] letters." Now we always approved any letters. It was nothing that would be difficult, something he could read to a whole class. But he would get the biggest kick out of the simple things that we did that he never dreamed of. So I feel that class also got another whole orientation to another approach to politics.

He took extreme pleasure in helping a Japanese lady. She had written. She was in Agnews State Hospital and she felt she shouldn't be there. So he said, "All right, I'm going to go out there and interview."

MORRIS: This is Dr. Young?

RIDDLE: [Yes.] He got all involved with this, talked with a psychiatrist, talked to the social workers, whatnot, and it ended up that it wasn't so much that she had a mental problem, but it was a language problem he discovered. He was so pleased with himself. When the three months were over, he said he really reluctantly had to get back, but he wanted to get his book together. It was quite an experience for all of us.

I wish I could think of some of the funny things. But you get unique consituent problems. Let me tell you just

the funny one. I'll just tell you one to show you that in the district you handle all kinds of problems. This is probably one of the more unique ones. A lady called, and I can't remember whether it was Dr. Young or one of our staff people that got it, but he really thought this was an interesting problem. A lady called and she was extremely upset. It was near the Christmas holidays. Her father had died and was cremated. She had asked that his ashes be sent from the mortuary in San Jose to San Francisco. What had happened, the ashes got lost in the mail. Well, they did everything. We called all the mortuaries, called the post office. Even the mortuary boards in Sacramento, and nothing. I mean, we just got nowhere. This lady was simply beside herself. So it was about five or six months later, we get a call from the San Bruno post office, and they had called, I guess it was Michael [?], or asked for Dr. Young. They said, "We want to tell you that we have found the ashes of Mr. So-and-so." Now, this is not a pun. "It was in the dead letter file." [Laughter] I mean, that's just one of many.

It's a fascinating place, but you never do the same thing twice, I don't think. Every day you have new problems that you really can help solve, and you get to know everything that is happening within the world and the community, and you go to all these referral agencies, and you're up atop of basically what is happening in your community. You work with the board of supervisors, you work with the city council, you have legislation, the kind of legislation where they have to get matching state funds, or problems that we might have in the community, that kind of thing.

MORRIS: Do you coordinate at all with--isn't it Norman Mineta who's the congressman from your district?

RIDDLE: Oh yes, we work with Norman Mineta, and also Congressman [Donald] Edwards. Like, if we have somebody with an immigration problem, well, we can't solve that, so I'll call Mineta or Edward's office and say, "May I send this constituent over? I can only go so far with them." They will take over, and they've done some wonderful things for us. I use that as an example, immigration problems. That's the other thing, and then having the state building in San Jose. We've only been here four years. Well, Alquist carried that legislation for about thirteen years, but it's now named the Alfred E. Alquist State Building. We have Vasconcellos, [Assemblyman Dominic] Cortese, [Senator Daniel] McCorquodale, and Alquist [all in the same building]. Well, with the four of us here we can coordinate various cases. Then we have all the state agencies there. It's really, really wonderful. It's too bad it took thirteen years to get it. We saved the state a lot of money on all these expensive rentals we had all over. Then if people come there they may want to talk to the assemblyman and the senator, and it just makes for a very . . .

MORRIS: A one stop service center.

RIDDLE: Yes, a one stop, efficient organization. We can confer on things. If we don't understand something we might go to Senator McCorquodale, or vice versa. Our communication skills are so much better. Four offices have more ideas than one office.

[End Tape 3, Side B]